

Chinese Drawing, Architectural Poetics

Traditional Painting as a Semantic Representation of Modern Architectural Design

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Abstract

This thesis is partly an attempt to explore the potential of pre-modern Chinese painting, on its distinctive formats and schemes to achieve spatial depth and time duration, as a way to interpret and design architecture. By a survey on changing modes of Chinese traditional landscape and cityscape paintings in different scales, the poetic language of painting will be gradually explored. Beyond pictorial techniques, language is concerned with an ideological level of understanding and experience. Thus, it signposts a wider significance of architectural representation – as a verbal medium to express narrative and critic semantics besides visual effects.

In this thesis, we will also see how traditional painting remains a base in the ideating process of several contemporary Chinese architects, so to avoid a mere uncritical imitation of international models. A subtle fusion of contemporaneity with cultural identity afforded by the presence of taken concepts from traditional painting, allows this architecture to increase its meaning and dimension.

Lastly, understanding such processes of ideation can possibly provide us assistance in the intuitive formulation of ways to enrich Western architecture. Particularly, establishing poetic connections to our cultural traditions can be a useful strategy to prevent Western architecture's frequent falls into empty excesses of utilitarianism, iconicism or simple banality.

Keyword: Chinese Painting, Architectural Poetics, Architectural Representation, Cultural Identity, Language of Architecture, Art and Architecture

Resumen

Esta tesis en parte intenta explorar la capacidad de la pintura china pre-moderna en sus peculiares formatos y esquemas para lograr expresar la profundidad del espacio y la duración del tiempo, como una manera de interpretar y diseñar arquitectura contemporánea. Mediante un estudio de la pintura tradicional de temática paisajística y urbana, y a diferentes escalas, se analizará el lenguaje poético de la pintura china. Más allá de las técnicas pictóricas, este lenguaje se sitúa en un nivel ideológico de comprensión y experiencia; expresa, por tanto, una gama de significados más amplia que la mera representación arquitectónica, actúa como lo haría un medio verbal para expresar una semántica de tipo crítico y narrativo, además de los consiguientes efectos visuales.

En esta tesis, también veremos cómo la pintura tradicional sigue siendo la base del proceso de creación de ideas de varios arquitectos chinos contemporáneos para evitar así una mera imitación acrítica de modelos internacionales. Una fusión sutil de la contemporaneidad con la identidad cultural proporcionada por la presencia de conceptos de la pintura tradicional permite a esta arquitectura ganar nuevas capas de significado y dimensión.

Por último, comprender tales procesos de ideación puede brindarnos ayuda en la formulación intuitiva de formas de enriquecer la arquitectura occidental. En particular, establecer conexiones poéticas con nuestras tradiciones culturales puede ser una estrategia útil para prevenir las frecuentes caídas de la arquitectura occidental en los excesos vacíos del utilitarismo, el iconicismo o la simple banalidad.

Palabras claves: pintura china, poética arquitectónica, representación arquitectónica, identidad cultural, lenguaje de la arquitectura, arte y arquitectura.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In landscapes, there are those through which you may travel, those in which you may sightsee, those through which you may wander, and those in which you may live... But those suitable for traveling and sightseeing are not as successful in achievement as those suitable for wandering and living.

—— Guo Xi.
The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams

1.1 Objectives

1.1.1 A Broader Vision on the Heterogeneous Culture – Inspiration from Chinese drawings



Fig 1-1. A Japanese print
and Wright's organic idea of
architecture. Source:
(Nute, 2000, p. 116)

The Tang period poet Wang Zhihuan once claimed: “In order to enjoy a grander sight, climb to a greater height”. The poet was not referring to the physical altitude but to that broader perspective one obtains from a higher intellectual stance. Art historian Michael Sullivan (1989) argued in *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*: “More and more thinking people today are coming to believe that the interaction between the cultures of Asia and the West is one of the most significant events in world history since the Renaissance”. Though intermittent and fraught with misunderstandings, the interaction between East and West, the encounter of oriental and occidental is, at last, an enlarged vision of what is happening parallelly, a recognition of what has been missing, and a process of acceptance and transformation. Diverse civilizations embody in their arts a variety of styles as well as various visions. Each time when one civilization meets another, better arts are created than either would achieve alone, not merely on techniques, but on a higher creative level of the way to see the world.

Besides Impressionist and Japanese prints, Cubists and African sculptures, the works of many influential architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, Carlo Scarpa, Jørn Utzon, Mies van de Rohe's etc. are somewhat relevant to oriental influences on art and architectural. Investigations about the interaction between oriental art and modern architecture conceptions never stopped. In the book *Oblique Drawing: A History of Anti-Perspective*, Massimo Scolari (2015) investigates anti-perspective visual representations over two thousand years and found that Perspective is not the only or even the best, and many other cultures in the world represent

architecture in various modes, depending on different ideological and philosophical orientations. Chinese painting is one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions in the world with a history of about three thousand years until the end of the 19th century, when contemporary Chinese painting concepts were adopted by Western modern ideology. The pre-modern period Chinese painting still witnessed the maturity of Chinese traditional culture on its identical graphical language.

What makes these paintings particular? Why is it still valuable in a contemporary context? Many art historians have answered these questions by their profound researches on the history of Chinese art. However, as architects and designers, how can we use the poetic language of Chinese traditional paintings universally to interpret and design architecture in a modern era? This thesis intends to answer this question. To start, it is first essential to get an overall and comprehensive understanding of the specific features of Chinese painting in terms of time and space. Simultaneously, it is also necessary to figure out the higher-level ideologies under the conventional schemas. Last but not least, connected with practice, several contemporary Chinese architects and artists' works and their processes of ideation will be analyzed. The ultimate goal is to find out a universal methodology to establish poetic connections to our cultural traditions, and to enrich architecture by preventing its frequent falls into empty excesses of utilitarianism, iconicism or simple banality.

1.1.2 A Modern Architecture with Codes of Tradition – Chinese Architecture towards Chinese Drawing

In the process of progression, the transformation is inevitable, but in the case of China, the change is in an unprecedentedly rapid speed so that little critical thinking could take place on the correctness of this process. As Wang Shu points out: “the Chinese tradition of three millennia has been totally demolished merely in three decades!” The continuous development is paying a price by the loss of ecological resources as well as cultural identity. In order to make an overtly artificial living environment at a rapid speed, hundreds of cities have acquired the same appearance, and the urban environment is no longer a dynamic phenomenon. Even in a national view of China, the identity between one city to another is disappearing, let alone in a global vision. In unreal renderings of reality, the ever-existed humanity is being neglected. In the uncritical adopting of international models, the Chinese are becoming more and more unfamiliar with their own past (Fig 1-2).

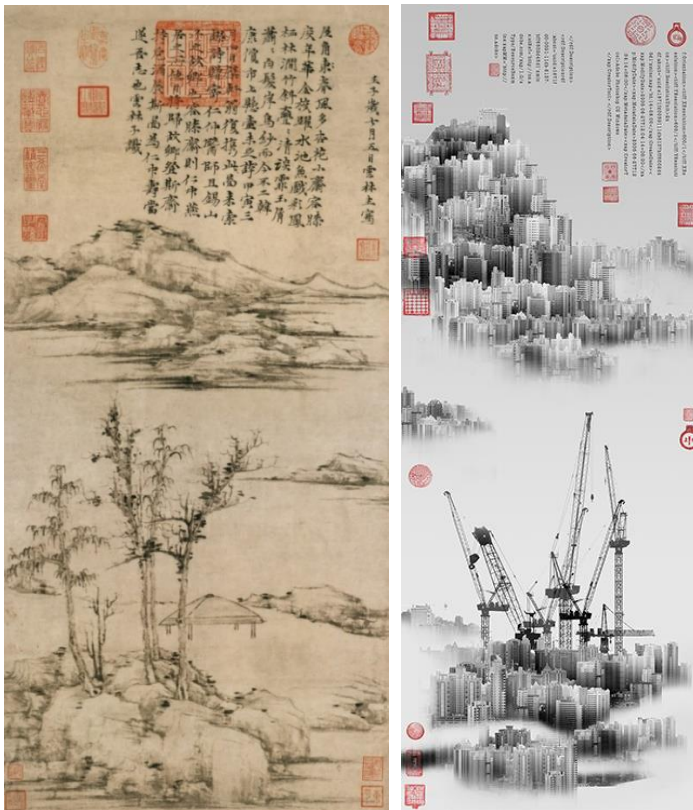


Fig 1-2. China’s loss of traditional past in the rapid urbanization.

Left: Ni Zan. *Rongxi Studio*. Yuan Dynasty

Right: Yang Yongliang. *Artificial Wonderland*. 2010. Source:

<<https://www.yangyongliang.com/new-gallery-97/6ezq7jee85mdtdzuxb8cxfyicbrf6l>>

Facing the loss of local culture in modernization, many efforts were made by a new generation of Chinese architecture. However, to understand the essence of the local culture, their explorations are not limited to traditional forms of Chinese buildings. Instead, pre-modern paintings have become a crucial material because actually, the Chinese way of looking at life was primarily through art which indulged in poetics and imaginative thinking. Rather than direct visual effect, the creative practice of the art which subtly influenced our feelings has been playing an important role in spiritual significance. Wang Shu is the first Chinese architect in history who received the Pritzker Price in the year 2012 for his contribution of making “an architecture rooted in the context yet universal¹”. He explained his design process: “Watching the Chinese landscape paintings as they are, making a record of a series of relative spatial perceptions - the building is completed. The way to watch is also the way to do design.” (Wang, 2016) Wang Shu got his inspiration from Chinese landscape painting and this made his buildings include a cultural identity in a contemporary context. What has he perceived from Chinese paintings? How did he transform traditional painting to modern architecture? Besides Wang Shu, many other Chinese architects and artists are carrying forward a future design idea corresponding an identical way of thinking. Which aspects of traditional painting do they value in considering its translation to modern architecture? In which phase of the design process do the influences of painting take place? On which extend do painting and architecture interact? Revaluating the language of traditional Chinese painting, rather than several visual skills, a local language of architecture may also be rediscovered. Furthermore, the ideating process is based yet also beyond a particular cultural context.

¹ Jury Citation for Wang Shu from the Pritzker Architecture Prize of the year 2012:
<www.pritzkerprize.com/2012/jury-citation>

1.2 State of Art

1.2.1 The Specific Features of Chinese painting when Related with Architecture

Format matter and the coherence of time and space

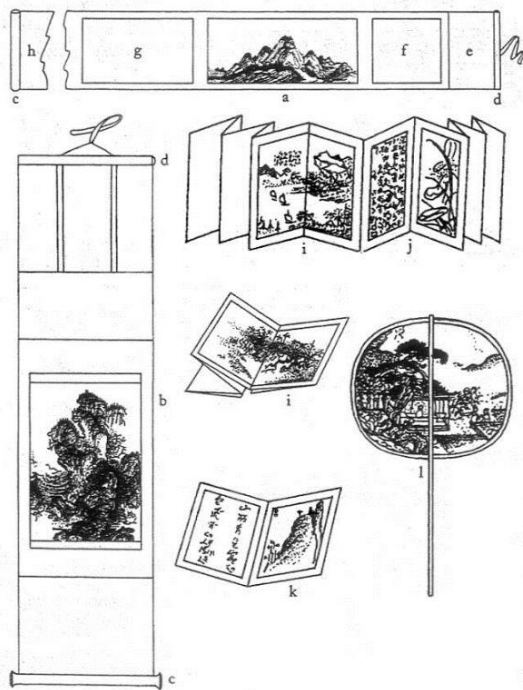


Fig 1-3. Various formats of painting: (a) handscroll; (b) hanging scroll; (i) double-leaf album painting; (j) paired single-leaf album paintings; (k) paired single-leaf album paintings, “butterfly” mounting; (l) screen fan. Source: (Clunas, 1997, p. 50)

In the book *Art in Space and Time* (Wu, 2009), art historian, critic and curator Wu Hung argued that in traditional art discussion about time and space, painting and sculpture are treated as a spatial art, and music, dancing, and poetry are the art of time. In Chinese traditional art, temporality plays an important role in understanding spatial art forms and time and space have been considered interrelated for a long time. The spatial-temporal aspect partly represents Chinese paintings specifically and it offers a possibility on painting’s encounter with the realm of architecture.

This coherent expression of space and time has everything to do with the matter of format. Wu (1996) claimed the importance of format in his book *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*:

In regard to a painting's physical form- like a framed canvas, a piece of plastered wall, a scroll, an album, a fan or a screen- all concepts and practices are related to its materiality.

He concluded that a painting must be understood both as an image-bearing object and as a pictorial image. Sharing the same origin of calligraphy, Chinese painting is usually painted with brush and ink on paper. The finished work can be mounted on scrolls, album sheets, walls, folding screens, and other mediums. However, in representations of architectural design, this issue of format has never been paid enough attention when related to the expression of coherent time and space and it will be introduced in this thesis.

Subject matter and the experiences in landscape and cityscape

Chinese painting also covers a variety of subjects: landscape, portrait, flowers, birds, animals, etc. The conception of the landscape is another issue that makes a Chinese painting different from a Western one. Chinese landscape painting is also called *shanshui painting* (山水画). *Shanshui* means mountain and water because this kind of paintings has usually been taken up with natural scenes including mountain, water, and trees. But with a closer observation, one may surprisingly find that landscape never appears as a faithful imitation of the realistic context; rather, it has been conceived as part of the artist's interiority. Guo Xi, a master of Chinese landscape painting from the North Song dynasty, pointed an essential principle to understand landscape paintings:

In landscapes, there are those through which you may travel, those in which you may sightsee, those through which you may wander, and those in which you may live... But those suitable for traveling and sightseeing are not as successful in achievement as those suitable for wandering and living² (Guo, 1960).

The “wandering” and “living” experiences implied in Chinese landscape painting, prior to sightseeing, constructs space and time poetically and it conveys the artist' ideal-mode schemes of a creative artificial environment, which is deeply based on their own life experience and affected by the philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

When relating landscape painting with architecture, the most frequently cited notion is Chinese gardens because Chinese landscape painting has been largely used as guidance for the construction of Chinese gardens. One in two-dimensions, and the other in three-dimensions, but they developed simultaneously in history. Researches as early as Ming dynasty like artist Ji Cheng's *The Craft of gardens*; leading researches of Chinese garden, Tong Jun's *Glimpses of Gardens in Eastern China*, Liu Dunzhen's *Suzhou Classical Gardens*, Peng Yigang's *Analysis of Chinese Classical Gardens*, Chen Congzhou's *On Chinese Gardens*, art historian Craig Clunas's *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* etc. all mentioned the interaction between the art of Chinese garden and the awareness of Chinese landscape painting, but besides literary descriptions, few specific approaches to achieve the interaction are introduced. Made by Wang Fei from Tsinghua University, *Research on The Interaction Between Ancient Chinese Painting and Classical Garden: with Case Study on Nine Suzhou Classical Gardens* argued that in history, both “painting guiding garden” and “garden guiding

² The original text is from *The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams* 林泉高致: 世之笃论, 谓山水有可行者, 有可望者, 有可游者, 有可居者。画凡至此, 皆入妙品。但可行可望不如可居可游之为。

painting” can be interpreted as representations of the other and both convey ancient Chinese scholars’ idea of the “juxtaposing contradiction”. It has put forward some philosophic approaches of design by comparing garden with painting. It is a new direction in the garden’s modern transformation.

Dissertations such as *The Evolution of Expression Forms of Housing Constructions in Ancient Chinese Landscape Paintings* and *Research on Architecture of Landscape Paintings Between Northern Song Dynasty & Southern Song Dynasty* have seen the importance of buildings appeared in landscape paintings, but they are referred to as archaeological pieces of evidence on a historic exploration for the evolution of traditional architecture. The poetic relationship between man and his place and the experience of the landscape were not paid too much attention.

Besides the landscape, cityscape in Chinese paintings that represent cities, houses, gardens, furniture, screens, etc. will be another subject of the research, because these man-made elements in paintings mostly indicated human’s position within the urban and social environment. Notably, although taking the same houses which appeared in Chinese paintings as reference, rather than depicting the historical styles or construction features of them, the dissertation will focus on their compositions for pictorial space and man’s occupation within them, because by studying Chinese paintings, the thesis concerns primarily the relations between human and places rather than a particular building’s physical and historical appearance. Meanwhile, human figures that play roles of users involve the bodily experience in viewing a painting. It will also be considered.

Books about Chinese cartography like *The history of Cartography, China in Ancient and Modern Maps*, and *Chinese Maps: Images of “All under Heaven”* and dissertations *Beyond and Within Images: A Preliminary Exploration of Chinese Historical City Maps*, *Ancient Maps in the Urban Form*, and *The City in City Maps* represented and narrated the ancient cities’ images not merely by measurements. *Spatial Language of the Illustrations in the Novels of Ming Dynasty* and *The Literary Basis of the Architecture of Visual Representation in Ming Gardens* inspired us to find the narrative code in the literacy and illustrations from Ming dynasty. Chinese painted screens and screen paintings discussed in Wu Hung’s *Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*, gardens painted in sequential albums analyzed in Cahill, James’s *Garden Paintings in Old China* bound up closely with the notion of space in practical or symbolic significance. These subjects are gaining more and more attention by researches on the term of space. In a systematical scope, all these subjects need to be discussed in relating Chinese painting with architecture.

1.2.2 Conventional Schemas and Cultural Aspects of Chinese Painting

Conventional schemas of Chinese painting

When concerned with the visual schema to represent spatial depth, Chinese art scholar Michael Sullivan, in *The Arts of China*, explained the Chinese visual mechanism with an infinite number of vanishing points, and how each compositional layer's front face is always paralleled with the picture plane with its own vanishing point. *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, a collection, and translation of Chinese painting theories, provide aid to understand those ancient Chinese painter's ways of appreciating and painting Chinese paintings. When concerning the traditional painting theories, most of the English translations of this thesis are quoted from this book. Among them, Guo Xi's famous "wandering and dwelling" experience of landscape painting and his son Guo Si's "three-distance" approach, have been further discussed as interpretations of painting as well as architecture. Ph.D. thesis from the University of Nottingham *Challenging Cavalier Perspective: An Iconological Study of Visual Perception of Depth in Chinese Representational Space* presented an iconological analysis of Chinese visual representation of space and argued the so-called definition of Cavalier Perspective is more relative to the meaning of projection than perspective and it overlooked the cultural significance. *Beyond Projection: A Study of Architectural Graphics from Cultural Perspective* by Chinese scholar Wu Cong, criticized the extensive trend of projection in Chinese architectural representation and attempts to relate architectural graphics with the theory of visual perception. These researches began to pay attention to the psychological and cultural reasons behind Chinese architectural representations and the issue of "whether perspective or projection" has been examined in a historical scope. George Rowley's *Principles of Chinese painting* also analyzed Chinese painting's pictorial principles in terms of cultural traits.

The psychological and cultural aspect of representation

“Artists tend to see what they paint, rather than paint what they see”³ a view nicely summed up by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) explained the basic visual mechanism. Theories, such as E.H. Gombrich’s *The Image and The Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* and *Art and Illusion*; Rudolf Arnheim’s *Visual Thinking* and *Art and Visual Perception*; John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing*; David Hockney’s *secret knowledge*; Leonard Shlain’s *Art and Physics* etc. may help us to understand the process of visual perception. The reason why people from different cultures see different is that their perceptions of what they see depend on their pre-experiences. To see is more than a visual process, it is a psychological one. Tom Porter’s *The Architect’s Eye: Visualization and depiction of space in architecture* have seen the psychological importance of visualizing space of architecture. Robin Evans’s *Translations from Drawing to Building* and *Drawing: The Motive Force of Architecture* by Peter Cook started to concern perspective in a cultural scope. Massimo Scolari’s *Oblique Drawing A History of Anti-Perspective* applied anti-perspectival examples from various cultures to question the dominance of Perspective.

The creative ways of seeing inspired the process of artistic as well as architectural and urban creations. In *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Sigfried Giedion discussed Cubist painters who seek for multi-points of view completely abandoning linear perspective in the early twentieth century. Since then, time was revolutionarily introduced in the conception of space, and architecture has revolutionarily stepped into a modern era. Architectural historian and critic Colin Rowe had seen the influence of Cubism painting in Le Corbusier’s architecture, and his theory of phenomenal transparency was further developed to urban investigations since the city is a considered a very cultural phenomenon. Alvar Aalto was a key advocate of humane modernism shown also by his drawings.

Influenced by Martin Heidegger’s *Building Dwelling Thinking* and Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, and Pallasmaa Juhani’s *Eyes of the skin*, a phenomenological approach has been introduced to modern architecture. This phenomenology theory was developed and translated into architectural design, which influenced generations of architects like Steven Holl and Peter Zumthor’s design concern for sensations and atmosphere. Relating this with architectural representation, in the book *Architecture Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Pérez Gómez, 1997) with a broad sweep of historical material, Alberto Pérez Gómez talked about the origin, the development and the influence of Western Perspective. In the article

³ Cited in Gombrich, “Art and Illusion”, p.86

Architectural Representation beyond Perspectivism, he explored the concept of building as a poetic translation rather than as a prosaic transcription. In the book *Attunement Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, Pérez Gómez views architecture through the lens of mood and atmosphere, taking Piranesi, Ledoux, and Hejduk for examples, he revealed the linguistic aspect of architecture— architecture as poetry and architecture as a multisensory (not pictorial) experience, an embodied experience.

In the research *Tools for Ideas: An Introduction to Architectural Design*, scholar Gänshirt (2007) divided the design tools into visual ones and verbal ones. We communicate our ideas, visions, and thoughts through visual tools like sketches, drawings, and models, as well as verbal tools like description, criticism and computer programs. Visual and verbal also correspond with the allocation of different thought structures to the two hemispheres of the human brain, one on logical thinking and another on space-form thinking. Therefore, in the design process of continuous perception and expression, verbal interpretation and criticism play roles as important as visual expression.

Linguistic aspect of Chinese painting

Chinese artists normally draw in their studios rather than in front of the landscapes and they painted things as they knew they were, not as they saw them. Their paintings, together with their calligraphic and literary works, reflected their own personal realities and their understanding of the world. In the book *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th-14th Century* (Fong, 1992), Chinese art historian Wen C. Fong explained that painting, for the Chinese, is a graphic sign or diagram that conveys meaning and never aspiring to realism alone, the Chinese artists were free to use the signs of both writing and painting to produce a poem-painting. The book *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* and the essays *Words in Chinese painting, Poetry and Pictorial Expression in Chinese Painting* (Martin J & Katherine R, 2016) explained the cultural relation of poetry and Chinese painting. A philosophy professor from Beijing University, Zong Baihua, argued in *The Spatial Consciousness Expressed by Chinese and Western Paintings* (Zong, 2006) that Chinese spatial consciousness is creative and poetic, based on the abstract expression of calligraphy instead of geometric and scientific perspective. The linguistic aspect of Chinese paintings is thoroughly analyzed in the view of art history but few relations can be found with architecture except for *Ten Thousand Things* in which the art Scholar Ledderose argued that an equal “module system” thinking was found in many kinds of art as well as in traditional building’s construction. This theory will be further discussed in this thesis.

1.2.3 The Contemporary Ideational Process of Chinese Architects and Artists

Based on the above cultural understanding Chinese paintings, a new generation of Chinese architects have brought a new vision on Chinese architecture, rather than merely pay attention to traditional architectural styles and techniques, they start to notice the cultural value of many kinds of traditional arts, and try to bring more creative ideas to definite architecture in a broader significance. Based on their efforts, some contemporary architects are trying to build a theory of modern Chinese architecture through Chinese paintings.

Architecture and Chinese Landscape Painting

Wang Shu's book *Construct the House* (Wang, 2016) as a collection of his previously published essays, talks about his main architectural thinking by ten projects and also his concerns on the Chinese architecture's future and pedagogy. Focusing on his design approach- to watch and learn from Chinese landscape paintings, five essays are chosen for further study: *The Narration and Geometry of Natural Appearance*, *On Construction*, *Poetics of Construction with Recycled Materials- A World Resembling the Nature*, *Inquiring the Hills from Beyond the Bank- An Aggregation of Diversified Architectural Typology* and *The Field of Vision on Section*. These essays are related to the kind of Chinese paintings Wang Shu has taken as references and drawing techniques that he used to represent his ideas. As an architect, his approach to the study of landscape painting focuses more on spatial structure than on the featured strokes and styles favored by Chinese art historians and critics. How ancient scholars construct nature elements in landscape paintings inspired Wang Shu to make construction on architecture. He believes our understanding of architecture depends on the way we see. By using a narrative principle on the geometry of nature, we could build with our interests in a poetic way.

A professor from Wang Shu's architecture department of China Academy of Art, Wang Xin, followed Wang Shu's theory and in *An Architecture Towards Shan Shui*, Wang Xin also declared the importance of the way of seeing. His central idea is to find the approach to "watch" Chinese landscape drawing, for the sake of a garden-like Chinese architecture. In this book, he well explained the techniques used in the ancient Chinese drawings to make space- "three distances" and has given a definition about the "approach of watch". Finally, a collection of fifteen students' works of his unique academia education is presented. He thought that in China, the definition of architecture academia never existed in the same way it did in the West, our teacher was Nature, and landscape drawings is the diagram for our construction. But in the

book's preface, Wang Shu also has pointed out that the work of Wang Xin "concerns too much about the form", and "the language is totally abstract with few considerations of the material...His approach may be more suitable for teaching instead of real construction. But the exploration of form is still needed since we lack an endogenous form in China" (Wang, 2015) Edited by Wang Xin and architectural critic Jin Qiuye, the book series *Arcadia* collected some Chinese architects' essays and academic experimental practices in terms of the modern transformation of Chinese architecture. The concept of Arcadia refers to imaginary Chinese gardens made by contemporary literati architects when their design ambitions for a better architecture could not be accomplished in real urban contexts, facing the extremely rapid urbanization. *Arcadia, Volume I: Painting and Garden* (Wang & Jin, 2014) and *Arcadia, Volume II: Illusion and Reality* (Wang & Jin, 2017) discussed how to transfer the traditional language of painting and gardening to contemporary architectural design by both academic dissertations and built architectural projects in China.

Professor Dong Yugan from Beijing University is dedicated to the Chinese garden research based on its cultural meaning and the bodily experience. *Eight Chapters on Perfection* discussed the different philosophic understanding of object/subject relation between Chinese and Westerns in terms of: "made by nature", "ambiguity", "complementation of the opposites", "managing place", "comprehending by analogy", "chasing the charm of the landscape" and "endless gradation". These are the basic philosophies to understand the origin of Chinese painting and Chinese garden design. In *Nine Types of Mountain Dwelling*, he took thirty Chinese landscape paintings as references to explain the pictorial experience as well the garden experience of dwelling in mountains. In the journal article *Lost in translation: Modernist interpretation of the Chinese Garden as experiential space and its assumptions*, professor from Nanjing University Lu Andong made a survey through the Chinese study of garden history since 1950s. He discovered the limitation and misunderstanding on the traditional garden concepts, and proposed a new narrative metaphor for the Chinese garden. This narrative approach of Chinese garden is aimed at the way of experience, a cultural one as well as an embodied one.

Based on the language of Chinese traditional landscape paintings and gardens, these researches have established a general direction regarding a new definition of modern architecture by the local culture. And in several other studies, the Chinese drawings are not limited to Chinese landscape paintings.

Other Chinese drawings and contemporary architectural representations

Li Xiaodong's *Conception of Chinese Space* (Li & Yeo, 2007) discussed the traditional aesthetics in the notions of cosmography, opera, and literature besides landscape painting, garden, and calligraphy. Through the analysis of metaphorical space, such as performance diagrams that show spatial positions of posture; the classic novel *The Story of Stone* which offers a view of the propensity of space within the Chinese context, general conclusions are withdrawn on the phenomena of and conception of space."

To reflect on, rather than act on urbanism, several Chinese architects have chosen to draw instead of construct. Based on Japanese architecture studio Atelier Bow-wow's approach, the urban illustrated book *A Little Bit of Beijing* and the mapping book of Shanghai *Made in Shanghai*, questioned two Chinese metropolis with critical visions besides documenting the urban reality. Chinese-American architect professor Yung Ho Chang has been continuously using narrative approaches to describe design ideas and recently narrative diagrams are also applied to explain design logic of his several built works in the book *Graphic FCJZ*. Like a "cheaper" construction of ancestors' gardens on paper, their drawings also are depicting imaginary realms of ideal living environments. After repeatedly visiting a big number of Chinese gardens, young Chinese architect Zeng Renzhen started to construct his imaginary gardens on paper, with ancient Chinese drawing techniques, in the book *Imagery Garden*. Taiwanese artist and architect Chen Chi-kwan abandoned architecture design since he devoted his life to drawing, whereas his drawings still express the sense of architecture. His drawings are largely influenced by the Western modern art movements whereas the ideologies and techniques are still local and Chinese.

All these contemporary Chinese architects and artists are facing both a Chinese traditional and a Western modern influence, but they have successfully achieved the balance between two conflicts. Their ideating processes also worth an exploration in attempts to establish a modern and still identical, practical and still poetic architecture.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Literary Research

Given the main questions aroused by the dissertation, the related literary reviews are developed as follows:

1. Research related with the Chinese painting's expression of space and time, which is one essential aspect that makes Chinese painting particular as well as the key to relate painting with architecture. Most works of this topic are made by historians of Chinese art like Wu Hung's *Art in Time and Space*, *Space in Art History*, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*. In several architect's works like Li Xiaodong's *Chinese Conception of Space*, Massimo Scolari's *Oblique Drawing A History of Anti-Perspective*, this particular notion of coherent time and space is also concerned.
2. Studies on the relationship between various types of Chinese painting and architectural design, which is the main issue of this thesis. This kind of researches are mostly made by Chinese architects and theorists who are heading on the road to define contemporary architecture by traditional cultural codes, and many of the studies are related to Chinese gardening, primarily in regards of Wang Shu's *Construct the House*, Wang Xin's *An Architecture Towards Shan Shui* and Wang and Jin's *Arcadia, Volume I and II*.
3. Simultaneously, the high-level ideologies underlined in the conventional schemas will also be explored. Ancient dissertations *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, and *The Mustard Seed Garden*, historical researches including Michael Sullivan's *The Arts of China*, Craig Clunas's *Chinese Painting*, George Rowley's *Principles of Chinese painting*, Wong Fen's *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th-14th Century*, Ledderose's *Ten Thousand Things*, and phycological studies E.H. Gombrich's *The Image and The Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* and *Art and Illusion*, Rudolf Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* and *Art and Visual Perception*, John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* all belong to this area.

1.3.2 Multidisciplinary Research

Architecture is often considered the most important human deed, the art form from which other art forms derive life and strength. However, in our time architecture has lost its artistic autonomy and become sheer construction in the name of economic benefit and rationality. Although built architecture has lost its power to influence our emotions, inspiration may yet be gained by the study of the architecture of painting, poetry, and music. These art forms have not, after all, been drained to the same extent by our material and utilitarian culture.

-Juhani Pallasmaa. (Pallasmaa, 1982)

Under the contemporary visual cultural context and in the multi-disciplinary age, architecture and art undoubtedly are sharing the same visual ideas on the cultural sense. The history of art and architecture are closely connected, even overlapped. The interaction between architecture and other art forms, may bring inspiration and help us to know how to build in a poetic and meaningful way. Materials like architects' sketches are tools to discover the architects' design languages and thinking behaviors. Then, in a psychological way, to explore the visual mechanism behind them is necessary. The thesis also intends to relate painting with narrative arts like poetry and literature that essentially expressed the same images of Chinese landscape painting and Chinese garden. And also film art as a visual medium to tell stories by plots and comic art which is a form of art that combines illustration and literature. When Chinese drawing is concerned as a way of expressing pictorial space, the fundamental visual techniques to create depth in the history of art, such as overlapping, foreshortening, perspective, projection are terms which need to be taken into account. When treating Chinese painting as a way to express a spiritual ideology, the philosophical meanings of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism will be considered. As a cultural domain, the understanding of Chinese painting requires a wide scope, therefore all these other disciplines bring aids to generate a comprehensive view. Simultaneously, questioning architecture in multiple disciplines, is also a confirmation of its own autonomy.

1.3.3 Field Research

Poetics seems an especially intangible notion as far as we are normally concerned by, whereas the ultimate goal of architecture is to build man's places in real urban and rural contexts. The thesis is also attempting practical ways to demonstrate poetics in architecture. Since architectural theory and practice are indivisible and architecture must be experienced with all senses, some successful case studies in China will be chosen for field research. For example, located in China, Wang Shu's completed projects in the China Academy of Art and the Wa Shan Guest House will be visited. To record and study the built projects, taking photos and making sketches will be the main ways to understand the contexts and make further analysis.

Studying Chinese painting and art history implies the need to visit the primary museums related to the research area because in this way we can get personal experiences and intuitive impressions that a printed image could not afford. The other reason is to see clearly the original medium of representation, as the format of a painting is as important as its image. For example, in Fan Kuan's painting *Travelers among Streams and Mountains*, the main peak seems to rush to the viewer not only because it takes up two-thirds of the painting; the fact that the original painting is about two meters in height actually emphasizes this visual perception. Pictures from the Internet or books may be cut, framed and unclear, especially not as precise as the original medium. Actually, this methodology to make this research is also partly the primary concern of this research – the way to see.

1.3.4 Graphic Analysis

Essentially, though we have introduced projects for the case studies, this is not an attempt to demonstrate each project's individuality. Instead, referred architects' particular way of seeing and their processes of designing are the primary concerns. Therefore, materials that show these architects' ideating processes, such as architects' drawings, their conversations, lectures, and pedagogic approaches are taken prior to visual descriptions on their projects. For example, the book *Wang Shu: Imagining the house* (Wang, 2012) collects most of Wang Shu's handmade drawing copies of his projects. The pencil sketches are printed with 1:1 scale on A3 papers to represent Wang's basic ideas and revisions on his design process. Through an architect's drawings rather than photographs, we can understand directly his devising process. And in this book, Wang Shu also explained each drawing's meaning and revisions from one to another. It is an important material for this dissertation.

Art scholars like Ernst Gombrich and Rudolf Arnheim prefer a much more psychological and aesthetic association in the metaphoric analysis. In their points of view, perceiving space of both pictorial and actual nature is the result of a mental process. Whereas taking form on its own behalf to faithfully analysis, a spatial form based on its physical body rather than imagination is also necessary. In this thesis, graphic approaches regarding analytic collages and diagrams will be applied for the sake of a better understanding of the abstract conceptions of Chinese paintings. Both words and images will be used to indicate the method of transforming Chinese painting's poetic language into architectural design.

1.4 Framework

After an introduction of the thesis, in the following two chapters, the issue of Chinese drawing's unique expression of time duration and spatial depth will be developed; accordingly, to time and space, the wandering and dwelling experiences put forward by Guo Xi will be extended, in a scope from panoramic scrolls till human-scale screen paintings, from landscape till cityscape. From Chapter 2 we will start a journey through Chinese scroll paintings in terms of temporality. In paintings depicting landscape and cityscape, we will see how the scroll format achieves a narrative time, no matter whether it is presented horizontally or vertically. This will indicate an approach to grasp the sense of time, which is also practical in the representation of architectural and urban design.

In Chapter 3 the main concern is the notion of spatial depth which traditional Chinese painting utilized to understand man's dwelling ideologies. In landscape paintings, "three depths" is well-known in history as the Chinese manner of Perspective. Besides composing a picture, it is also closely related to the Chinese conception of landscape and space. As a materialization of landscape paintings, the literati garden and its graphical expression will also be discussed. Simultaneously, as a continuation of the second chapter, the referred panoramic scrolls will be re-examined on a relatively smaller scale. Focusing on the cottages in landscape panoramas, habitations in urban narrations, and furniture in domestic illustrations and prints, an identical dwelling culture will be gradually presented.

The second and third chapter attempt to generate a comprehensive view of Chinese painting, whilst the fourth chapter targets at a higher-level interpretation on these paintings' conventional schemas and linguistic aspects. Psychological analysis on the visual mechanism and the spatial perception process will help us to see through painting's appearance, and the semantical feature of Chinese painting will bring us a new vision on relating poems and paintings, words and images. On this sense, a poetic language of architectural representation will be discovered.

Chapter 5 is inclined to examine the practical use of this poetic language in the present context. Several contemporary Chinese architects and artists' writings, drawings and projects will be reflected. Their ideating processes of design rather than the forms of their projects are the primary concern because poetics lie in the realm of thinking. A drawing's verbal expression is unmeasurable, but indispensable in creating a meaningful architecture, especially in our present time material and utilitarian culture.

Chapter 2

Wandering in Chinese Paintings: The Narrative of Durational Space

A mountain nearby has one aspect. Several miles away it has another aspect, and some tens of miles away yet another. Each distance has its particularity. This is called 'the form of the mountain changing with each step.' The front face of a mountain has one appearance. The side face has another appearance, and the rear face yet another. Each angle has its particularity. This is called "the form of a mountain viewed on every face." Thus can one mountain combine in itself the forms of several thousand mountains. Should you not explore this?

—— Guo Xi.
The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams

2.1 Chinese Landscape Painting: Wandering in Nature

2.1.1 Landscape Scroll: Progression of a Journey

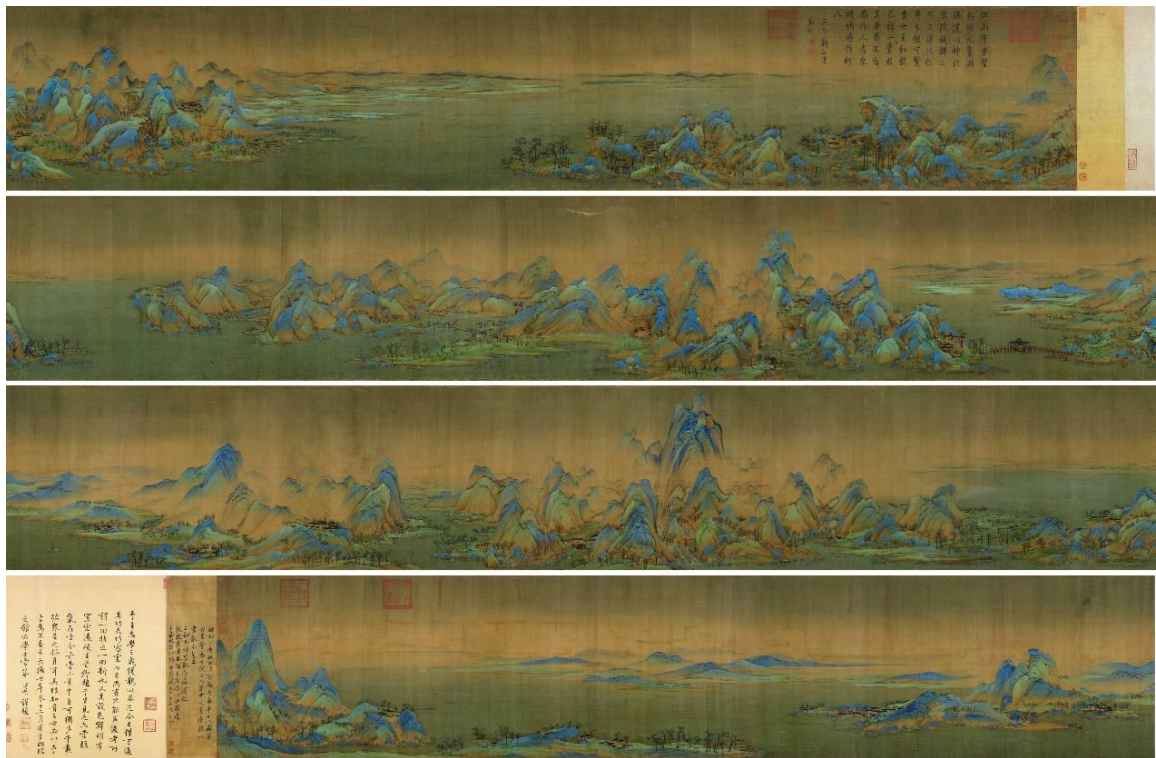


Fig 2-1. Wang Ximeng (王希孟). *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, 千里江山图. North Song dynasty. Scroll. 119.1 x 52 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing

Scroll¹, the predominant medium of Chinese painting, allows for the depiction of a

¹ Standard description of handscroll offered by Jerome Silbergeld: Handscroll paintings range from less than three feet to more than thirty feet in length; the majority are between nine and fourteen inches high. Paintings are mounted on a stiff paper backing; those of greater length are often painted on several sections of silk or paper joined together. At the left is attached a round wooden roller, about which the scroll is wound when not in use and which is occasionally decorated with a knob of ivory or jade. At the right is a semi-circular wooden stave which keeps the scroll properly stretched from top to

continuous narrative or journey: “the viewing of a handscroll is a progression through time and space - both the narrative time and the space-time of the image, but also the literal time and distance it takes to experience the entire painting. As the scroll unfurls, so the narrative or journey progresses.” (Delbanco, 2008)

The 11.91 meters-long landscape painting *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains* (Fig 2-1) represented the landscape view of the whole terrain of China. The painter Wang Ximeng had drawn it when he was only eighteen years old under the guidance of Emperor Huizong. The long and narrow scroll presents a panoramic view that makes us feel the greatness of a country and the ambitions of a young artist. In September of 2017, this painting was exhibited the fourth time at palace museum in Beijing. But a scroll wide open in the glass case of the museum is actually not the way you are supposed to see it (Fig 2-2. left). What we lose nowadays is the cinematic unfolding of the composition as we go along (Fig 2-2. right). When handling this kind of artwork and unrolling it, one may recognize a visual experience of the painting as well as an embodied one.

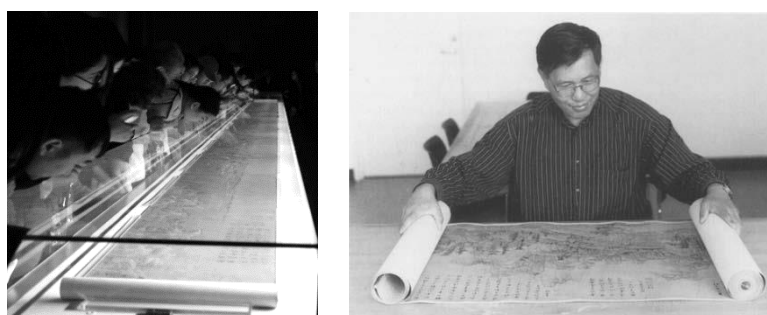


Fig 2-2. Viewing the scroll in Nowadays (left), and viewing a scroll in traditional way (right)

The painter Wang pursued “the fun of right close thousands of miles²” in this nearly 12 meters long painting. It means to view this painting, we should first appreciate it as a whole by a general view. The artist designed and conceived seven groups of mountains in total. If we view it from the beginning to end, we cannot help indulging in a symphony. In each group of mountains, there is the main peak and from the first episode to the seventh, mountains become higher and higher, gradually develop to the climax at the fifth mountain group where a peak reach the sky. Then the mountains begin to gather and become gentler.

bottom. The painting is viewed from right to left, as one reads in Chinese, unrolling a bit at a time from the roller and transferring the excess to a loose roll temporarily maintained around the stretcher on the right. About one arm’s length is exposed at a time for viewing. (Silbergeld, 1982)

² 咫尺千里之趣, a technique of expression, means to represent the view of thousand miles just in front of you closely.

Lastly, in the seventh episode, the whole music turns to a loud ending sound when the mountains suddenly rise again. Each episode of mountains is separated by water as well as connected by bridges.

Scroll makes Chinese painting an art of time as well as of space. A scroll could be vertical or horizontal, depending on the themes and either way shows a panoramic and universal point of view. It can contain what is happening on one day, on four seasons, even on years of history. This composition of coherent time has the same origin of Chinese calligraphy for its motion nature. Because the core of Chinese aesthetics lies in the movement of clouds, the blooming of flowers and the growth of trees. The cosmic temporality implied in Chinese philosophy is also the one implied in a scroll.

Another well-known scroll painting called *Autumn Colors among Rivers and Mountains* (Fig 2-3) is from the Song dynasty artist Zhao Boju (ca. 1162). In this painting, horizontally, five areas of water intriguingly divide as well as combine six sections of mountains. In each section, mountains are twisted on tilted grounds to suggest spatial depth and the broad river also recedes convincingly into the distance. Vertically, in the middle ground, our visual stations are distributed to the background in various directions. However, the upwards background and the lateral foreground take back our view into a whole by connecting each section. (Fig 2-4).



Fig 2-3. Zhao Boju (赵伯驹), Song Dynasty. *Autumn Colors on Rivers and Mountains* 江山秋色图. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 55.6 x 323.2 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing

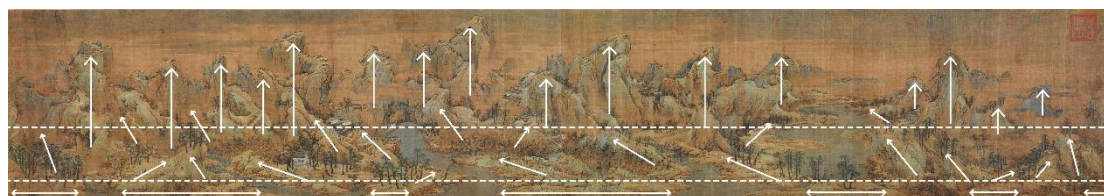


Fig 2-4. Drawn by the author. Analysis of Visual Stations

When we try to represent something on a long and narrow format, the perception of time is playing a so dominant role that a painter may lose the control of spatial depth. However, the early Chinese artists found a solution to this contradiction of time and space in landscape paintings, it is called the “three distances”. This approach is applied by Zhao Boju to balance time duration and spatial depth in his painting. It is also known as the “Chinese perspective”.

2.1.2 The “Three Distances” of Pictorial Space

The concept of distance

“If we grant that the Chinese approach to nature caught the experience of space in time more completely than scientific perspective could, we must admit that the visible tangibility of space was sacrificed...How then will the Chinese compensate for the loss of tangible space? Depth is the first essential.” (Rowley, 1974) “Depth” is the Chinese traditional approach of compositing pictorial space as well as the spiritual pursuit for a spatial ideology based on the Chinese philosophy of Taoism³.

Chinese artist and theorist Zong Bing (宗炳, 375-443), in the first essay on landscape painting *Introduction to Painting Landscape*, said: “The sages cherish the Tao within them, while they respond to the objective world; the virtuous purify their minds, while they appreciate represented forms ⁴”. The landscape has a material existence, and yet reaches also in a spiritual domain. This is represented by the concept of “distance”, also called “depth”. Zong Bing explained:

However, the K'un-lun mountains are immense and the eyes' pupils small. If the former come within inches of the viewer, their total form will not be seen. If they are at a distance of several miles, then they can be encompassed by inch-small pupils.

Obviously, the artist in the early 5th century already knew that depending on our viewpoint, the mountain seems big or small, far or near. It is not the object itself, but the way we perceive and reflect it, that gives us the sense of distance. And one's expression of distance in landscape paintings is also the expression of his Taoist spirit. Zong Bing, in the following paragraph, also introduced us the basic approach for constructing a Chinese landscape painting:

³ Taoism is a religious or philosophical ideology of Chinese origin which emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao (way, path) of naturalness, spontaneity and simplicity.

⁴ The Chinese text is 圣人含道暎物，贤者澄怀味像。The English translation is quoted from (Sullivan, 1962, p. 102)

Now, if one spreads thin silk to capture the distant scene, the form of K'un-lun's Lang peak can be encompassed in a square inch. A vertical stroke of three inches will equal a height of thousands of feet, and a horizontal stretch of several feet will form a distance of a hundred miles. That is why those who look at paintings are only troubled by awkwardness in the likeness and do not consider that diminution detracts from verisimilitude. This is a natural condition. In this way, the lofty elegance of the Sung and Hua mountains as well as the soul of deep valleys can all be included in one picture⁵.

When we miniature a grand mountain to one paper, it is not important if the mountain is as real as the one we are depicting (one painting is normally conceived in the artist's mind after observing various real mountains), what makes sense is the "lofty elegance" expressed in the painting as well as in nature. It comes from the "afar" feeling while traveling in painting and in our mind.

⁵ 且夫昆仑山之大，瞳子之小，迫目以寸，则其形莫睹，迥以数里，则可围于寸眸。诚由去之稍阔，则其见弥小。今张绢素以远暎，则昆、阆之形，可围于方寸之内。竖划三寸，当千仞之高；横墨数尺，体百里之迥。是以观画图者，徒患类之不巧，不以制小而累其似，此自然之势。如是，则嵩、华之秀，玄牝之灵，皆可得之于图矣。English translation quoted from (Bush & Shih, 2012, p. 37)

Three distances

Following Zong Bing, great Chinese painter Guo Xi (郭熙 1000-ca. 1090) proposed the “three distances” method as a more practical principle of painting landscape to express the sense of distances by the two-dimensional medium. Guo (1960) described the “three distances” of the “high distance”, “deep distance” and “level distance” in his treatise on landscape painting *The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams* (林泉高致):

Mountains have three types of distance. Looking up at the mountain's peak from its foot is called the high distance. From in front of the mountain looking past it to beyond is called deep distance. Looking from a nearby mountain at those more distant is called the level distance⁶.

Despite this, Guo Xi also introduced a method to judge a painting when no clear distances are seen:

Without deep distance, it seems shallow; without level distance, it does not recede and without high distance, it stays low.⁷

The “three distances” approach is concerned with the various visual stations of viewing the landscape and the coherent pictorial composition of mountains. “A high distance design in height would probably play up the foreground, a deep design in depth would depend chiefly on the middle distance, and a level design would emphasize the far distance... These many possible arrangements set the larger framework for the design principle of rising-falling. (Rowley, 1974)” Despite for the pictorial composition, three distances are also closely connected to the experience and atmosphere of the landscape. A vertically high cliff always arouses the feeling of the sublime and awesomeness. Depth could inspire mystery and uncertainty. The broadness of landscape could call up the feeling of placidity and easiness. As shown in the patterns of three distances: height and grandness are emphasized by drawing in springs and waterfalls; the deep sense is emphasized by clouds, and range and extension are emphasized by the suggestion of mists (Fig 2-5).

⁶ The original Chinese text is quoted as “山有三远：自山下而仰山颠，谓之高远；自山前而窥山后，谓之深远；自近山而望远山，谓之平远 (Guo, 1960)”. English translation (Ibid. p. 168)

⁷ The whole text is: “A mountain without haze and clouds is like spring without flowers and grass. If a mountain is without clouds, it is not refined; without water it is not charming. Without paths it is not living; without forests it is not growing. Without deep distance it seems shallow; without level distance it does not recede and without high distance it stays low.” (Ibid.)



Fig 2-5. Diagram of three distances: high distance represented with waterfall, deep distance with mists and level distance with vast water. (Mai-mai Sze, 1978, p. 162)

Therefore, the “high distance” is more than a look from below to feel the verticality of the mountains. For example, the famous masterpiece by Fan Kuan (active ca. 990-1030), *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains* (Fig 2-6) is a typical high-distance view according to Guo Xi’s definition. In the painting, a monolithic mass of mountain peak rises vertically in front of us (the original painting is an around two-meter high hanging-scroll). The dominant composition of the mountain, which takes up two-thirds of the entire painting, is the emblem of the universe. The high impression of the mountain is partly shown by its occupation of the picture, but more importantly and curiously, the mountain has no feet. In other words, the feet of the mountain is hidden behind the mist. The mysterious mist arises between the foreground and the background. It also separates the world of humans from the world of the mindedness. Fan Kuan’s painting represents not an actual view of nature but a conceptual vision of the macrocosmic universe.



Fig 2-6. Fan Kuan (范宽, active ca. 990-1030). *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains* 溪山行旅图. Hanging scroll, ink, and color on silk, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei

With deep distance, from the front, you look through the layers of mountains. This is concerned with the internal part of the mountain and the depth by overlapping. This deep distance of overlapping is shown by Guo Xi in the representative painting *Early Spring* (Fig 2-7). Compared with a monumental mass peak Fan Kuan's painting, the mountain boulders are stacked curvedly across the picture plane. The "S" shaped twisting and turning peaks by extravagant brushes give us a feeling of spiral movement. Guo Xi is representing an unreal landscape full of imagination and emotion. The painting is titled early spring and we can feel the atmosphere created by lively spring mountains awakening from a cold and dead winter. Guo Xi is a master at using the clouds and the mist to conceal and reveal elements as well as bringing life into them. The dramatic overlapping of emerging and receding stones suggests a great depth.

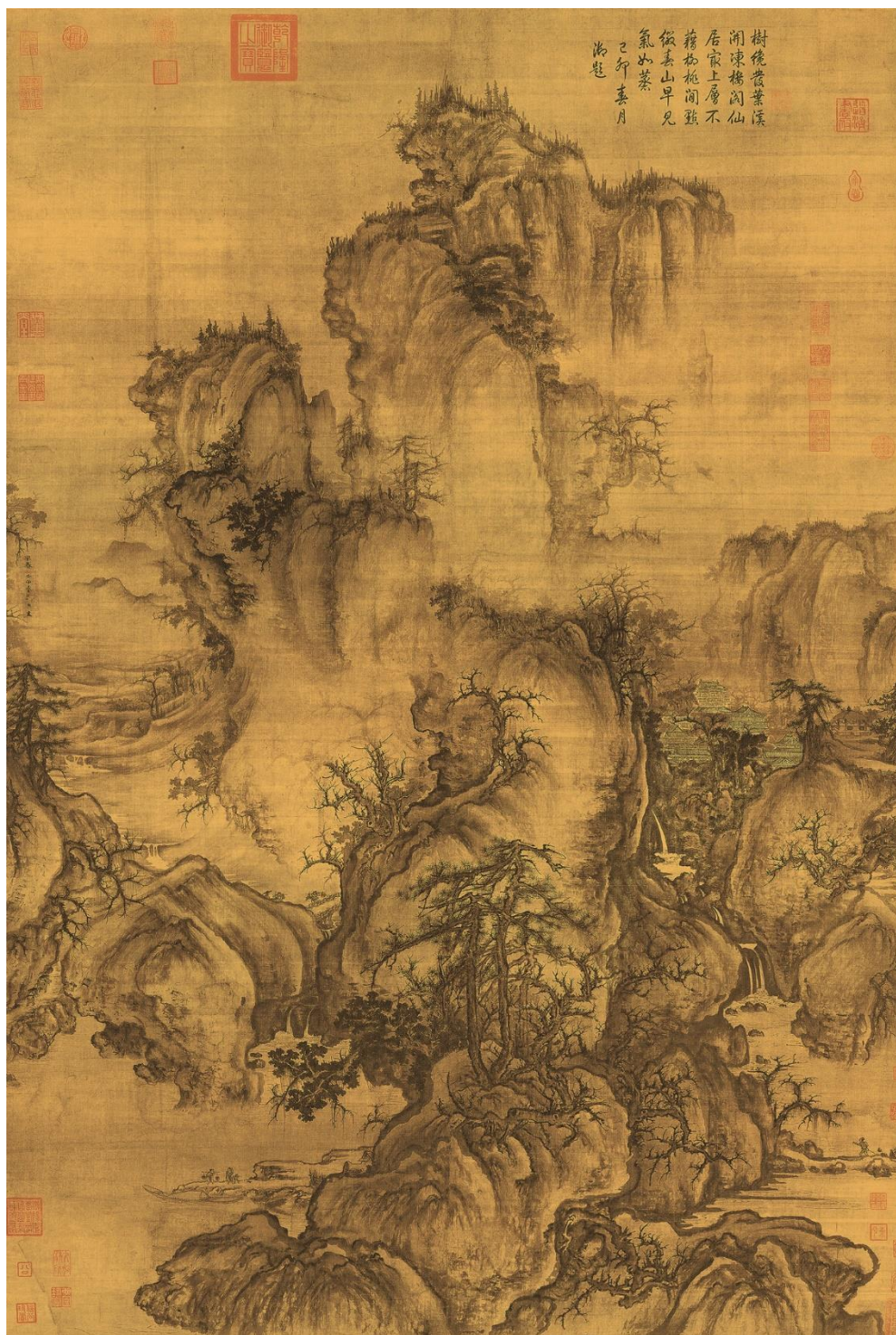


Fig 2-7. Guo Xi (郭熙, ca. 1000-1090). *Early Spring* 早春图. Dated 1072. Hanging Scroll, ink and light color on silk, 158.3 x 108.1 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei

Another painting of Guo Xi *Old Trees, level distance* (Fig 2-8) presents a typical level-distance view. The artist has constructed a sense of recession into space by filling up the panorama with a series of horizontal elements, in the foreground, middle-ground, and in the far distance. They recede in space because they are changing in scale with the change of ink tone from dark to light, with tall foreground trees set against a wide river valley. For the formula of “level distance”, yet normally, it is not necessary to compose a horizontal picture. The key to achieving the level distance is to gaze across an expanse of distance from a relatively high vantage point.



Fig 2-8. Guo Xi (郭熙, ca. 1000-1090). *Old Trees, Level Distance* 树石平远图.

Date ca. 1080. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 35.9 x 104.8 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Other “distances”

The mist in this painting also helped to suggest the sense of distance as Guo Xi said: “If one wished to describe a stream that stretches afar, one must not paint its entire course; only when its course is shaded and interrupted will it appear long.⁸”. To the basic three traditional types of distances, artist Han Zhuo (韩拙, active ca. 1119-26) in the twelfth century added three more distances: “broad distance”, “lost distance” and “secluded distance”:

When there is a wide stretch of water by the foreground shore and a spacious sweep to distant mountains, this is called broad distance; when there are mists and fogs so thick and vast that streams in plains are interrupted and seem to disappear, this is called hidden distance; when scenery becomes obliterated in vagueness and mistiness, this is called “obscure distance.”⁹

With Han Zhuo’s theory, we understand that the expansive water, vast distant mountains, mists, and fogs in landscape paintings are significant for the painting’s space-building. The vague and ineffable elements do not mean to cover where the artist could not draw well – instead, they are suggesting another dimension of misty distance in the pictorial space. Similar to Leonardo da Vinci’s aerial perspective or atmosphere perspective, the mists are as important as the peaks in landscape paintings at the sense of composing a picture.

On the Yuan dynasty, landscape paintings become more self-expressional when artists focus on the calligraphic strokes to express their ideas and emotions. However, later Yuan artists simplified three distances to schematic formulae which becomes more convenient to handle. One of the most prestigious painters of the Yuan dynasty Huang Gongwang developed Guo Xi’s three distances in his essay titled *Secrets of Landscape Painting*:

In discussing the painting of mountains, one speaks of three distances. When it continues uninterrupted from the bottom, it is called “level distance”; when it is seen from nearby through divisions and openings in alignment, it is called “removed distance”; a distant view beyond the mountain is called “high distance”.¹⁰

Though based on Guo Xi’s theory, Huang’s three distances is more specific about how to organize mountains to achieve the effect of distances – to split the vision by juxtaposing two mountain scenes with a wider visual field like a vast amount of water or a valley in between; to make additive spatial recessions along the consistent mountain feet and to

⁸ 水欲远，尽出之则不远，掩映断其派则远矣。(Ibid.)

⁹ Original Chinese texts: 有近岸广水、旷阔遥山者，谓之阔远；有烟雾溟漠、野水隔而仿佛不见者，谓之迷远；景物至绝而微茫缥缈者，谓之幽远。Cited from *Compilation on Landscape* by Han Zhuo, translation from (Ibid.)

¹⁰ 山论三远，从下相连不断谓之平远，从近隔开相对谓之阔远，从山外远景谓之高远。Translation from (Cahill, 1976, p. 87).

emphasize a distant view beyond the peak top into infinity. All these visual techniques can be seen in Huang's painting *Living in the Fuchun Mountains* (Fig 2-9).



Fig 2-9. Huang Gongwang (黄公望). *Living in the Fuchun Mountains* 富春山居图. C.1350. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Wandering Experience: Multiple Visual Stations

Whether from Guo Xi, Han Zhuo or Huang Gongwang, the concept of distance is always concerned with the visual indication of multiple viewpoints. Therefore, any of the three distances is never applied alone in Chinese landscape painting. There is a combination of various distances in most of the cases. In this way, the viewing experience of landscape rather than its mere form is captured because the artist should paint in the same way he perceives landscape. Guo Xi called this approach “step by step” and “face by face”:

A mountain nearby has one aspect. Several miles away it has another aspect, and some tens of miles away yet another. Each distance has its particularity. This is called ‘the form of the mountain changing with each step.’ The front face of a mountain has one appearance. The side face has another appearance, and the rear face yet another. Each angle has its particularity. This is called “the form of a mountain viewed on every face.” Thus can one mountain combine in itself the forms of several thousand mountains. Should you not explore this?¹¹

What artists like Guo Xi wanted to express by landscape painting is not the form-likeness of mountain’s appearance, but the “wandering” experience of it. Therefore, the schemata of landscape painting are always combinations of various distances from various viewpoints. Without seeing, we cannot sense the physical space; without wandering, we cannot sense the mental space. The “three distances”, more than a way of spatial expression, is a spiritual requirement of the ideas that conceived cognitive images.

Apparently, “three distances” is distinct comparing to the scientific perspective which depends upon a diminution in the size of the verticals according to vanishing points. Also differs from the western “bird’s-eye view,” in which the whole is continuously organized under scientific perspective with a fixed angle of vision, the three depths enabled the artists to give freely the impression of the panorama. Under a moving focus, any of the three distances will be applied which would best bring out the character of the terrain.

From a section of the scroll paintings (Fig 2-10, and Fig 2-11), we can also see how the artist successfully applies flexibly the six distances from a general view. The painting invites the viewer into the painting to travel, our eyes roam between mountains, then drive the boat above the water and later stand on the top of the peak. Thus, we perceive the “thousands of mountains in one mountain”.

¹¹ 山近看如此，远数里看又如此，远十数里看又如此，每远每异，所谓“山形步步移”也。山正面如此，侧面又如此，背面又如此，每看每异，所谓“山形面面看”也。如此，是一山而兼数十百山之形状，可得不悉乎？ (Guo, 1960). Translation from (Bush & Shih, 2012, p. 153)

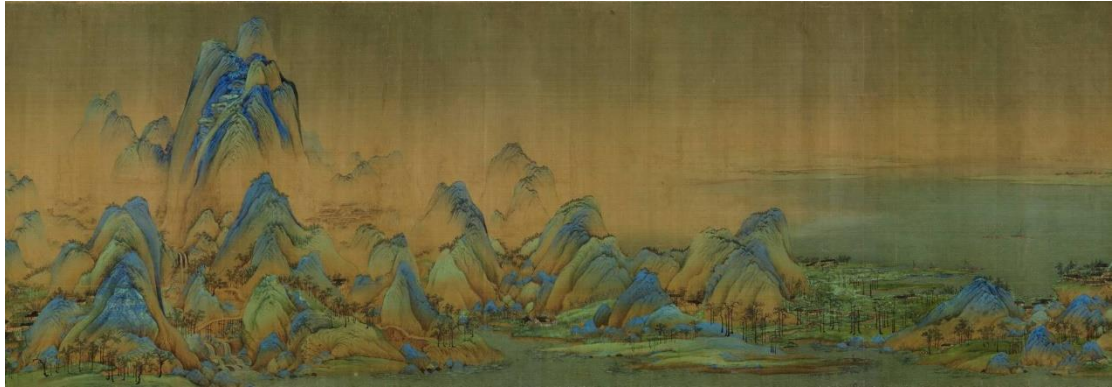


Fig 2-10. Moving-focus view of various distances. Section of Fig 2-1.



Fig 2-11. Moving-focus view of various distances. Section of Fig 2-3.

2.2 Chinese Cityscape Painting: Wandering in City

2.2.1 Urban Scroll

The “three distances” approach is vastly applied in Chinese landscape painting to achieve the sense of space in depicting the world of Nature. It involves both the physical and imaginative displacements. While we are wandering in nature by our eyes’ motion, we are roaming in the world of mindedness as well. However, comparing to a landscape scroll, it seems not that easy to compose an urban scroll with the same method of distances, because our artificial world is built with houses, roads and human’s interactions instead of mountain and water. In this section, we will see how panoramas of the cityscape are generated by the format of a scroll.



Fig 2-12. Zhang Zeduan (张择端). *Along the River During Qingming Festival* 清明上河图. 12th century. Ink and colors on silk. 24.8 x 528.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Beijing.

The scroll painting *Along the River During Qingming Festival* (Fig 2-12) is one of the most renowned works among all Chinese paintings. The artist Zhang Zeduan (1085-1145) captured the prosperous street scene at the Qingming Festival in Kaifeng, the capital of the Northern Song dynasty. This about five-meters-long painting begins on the right section by representing the suburb area, then the scroll passes through the city center and eventually, it leads to the city gate on the left end. A river meandering through the entire length connects the sections and a great bridge crossing the central river is the main focus of the scroll. Laterally, the painting encompasses hundreds of figures and dozens of man-made structures. And many Chinese historians have used this painting to investigate the Song history of architecture and humanity. However, this painting is also of great value for understanding how an urban narration is developed in representation.

A cinematic experience is aroused when we hold this painting in hand and unroll it section by section from the rural scene to the urban life. The narrative timeline is progressed horizontally. Meanwhile, when we pause to focus on a particular portion, we can also feel the sense of spatial depth in the oblique direction. That is a double directional visual system. The horizontal direction indicates the sequential time and oblique direction shows the spatial depth.

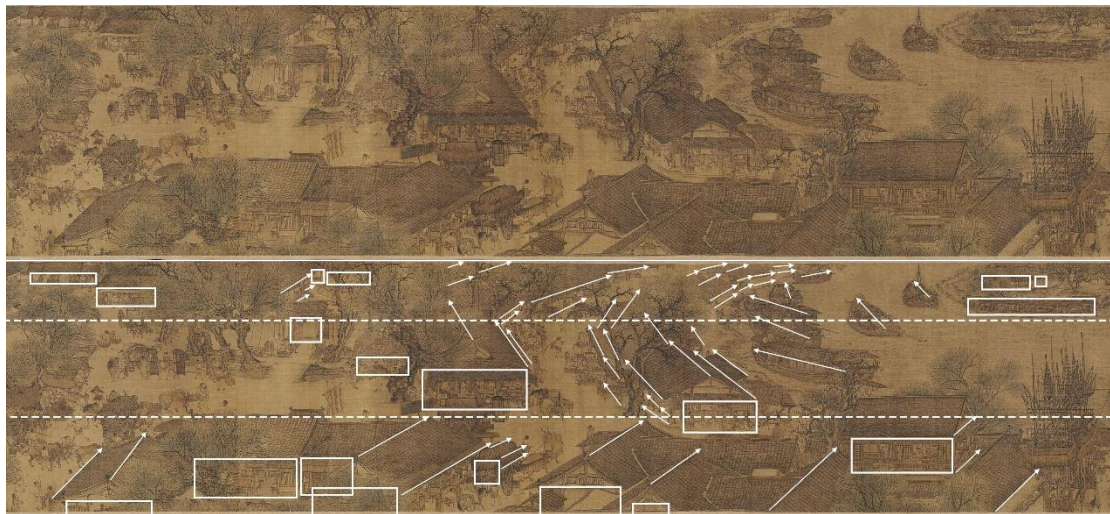


Fig 2-13. Drawn by the author. Diagram of the street scene. The foreground is larger than the middle ground, which is in turn larger than the further middle ground, suggesting a conscious receding of space

In the Qingming painting, on one hand, to keep the diachronic temporality, Zhang Zeduan arranged the long scroll horizontally by an invisible timeline with which the main street is paralleled by the scroll most of the time, avoiding any perspective. Because when we are walking along a long street, what matters to us are the sceneries on both roadsides instead of where the street ends. On the other hand, the buildings and roads along the main street are depicted in an oblique direction. And the more afar the building is, the smaller it is (Fig 2-13). The artist would firstly make the buildings in groups, then an exquisite collage of the groups composes the spatial depth of the painting.

This moving focus scheme of Chinese painting is also called Cavalier perspective. But the concept is more similar to projection than to perspective because the spatial obliqueness does not apply vanishing point. Neither it is axonometric because even the rule of “closer bigger, farther smaller” does not fit whereas a building could be drawn “closer smaller, farther bigger”. What matters is the comprehensive composition of the whole painting in terms of coherent time instead of the authenticity of one spatial moment. “In Chinese paintings, however, pictorial scale tends to dominate natural scale; that is, the size of an object depicted was determined by needs of design and not rules of geometric perspective.” Foreground features might be diminished to avoid obstruction and overemphasis, while distant objects might be enlarged to act as a counterpoint to the middle distance and foreground. (Harley & Woodward, 1994)

As said formerly, in landscape painting, Chinese artist suggests an imaginary scene rather than the faithful representation of nature. And in an urban scroll like Qingming, which part is from the real city of Kaifeng and which part is imagined by the artist? Professor Liu Diyu from Tongji University tried to find the answer to reveal the real urban images of the Northern Song dynasty capital city. Based on *Ying Zao Fa Shi* (营造法式, a Chinese treatise book on architecture) and pictorial human scales, Liu Diyu illustrated a geometric plan (Fig 2-14) to indicate the imagined urban planning at that historical period of painting. Through the general plan, he found that most of the houses in the painting are organized according to the form of the River Bian or following the direction of the city gate. And people’s activities are closely concerned with the urban spaces’ openness.



Fig 2-14. Liu Diyu. The imagined layout of painting *Along the River During Qingming Festival*. (Diyu, 2010)

Lewis Mumford (1961) in the book *The City in History* used one illustration from *Along the River during Qingming Festival* and said:

If life prevail, the city of the future will have, as but few contemporary cities have, the qualities are shown in this Chinese painting of the Festival of Spring: with the endless permutations and combinations that varied landscapes, varied occupations, varied cultural activities, and the varied personal attributes of men make possible. Not the perfect hive but the living city.

What Mumford has seen from the ancient *Qingming* painting is a kind of urban dynamics that a future city foreseen. In China, streets instead of squares used to be the main places for people's public activities. The informal constructions forming uneven street borders also made the city full of life.



Fig 2-15. Wang Hui (王翬 1632-1717). *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, Scroll Seven: Wuxi to Suzhou* 康熙南巡图, 第七卷: 无锡至苏州. 1698 (Qing dynasty). Handscroll. Ink and Colour on Silk. 68.8 x 2932.4 cm. Mactaggart Art Collection.

Another scroll of cityscape *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* by Qing dynasty painter Wang Hui depicted urban scenes from the Chinese Emperor Kangxi's 1689 inspection tour. The scroll seven is located from Wuxi to Suzhou and Tiger Hill (Fig 2-16). Painter and art theorist David Hockney confessed that he spent four hours watching this scroll at the first time in the Metropolitan Museum of Art¹². The scroll was commissioned by the emperor of China in 1690 and took about one year to paint. For example, he pointed out a fascinating corner in this painting (Fig 2-16) and explained to us how to watch it¹³. With shifting viewpoints, once we are looking at the shops even the interior yard, while suddenly we are on the bridge, but we can see the bridge itself as well. The painting is guiding your eyes like you are taking a bird's view, but a flying bird instead of a still one.

¹² Lecture by David Hockney: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvZmKMEdetY>>

¹³ David Hockney on perspective and looking: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrFDGct4kH8>>



Fig 2-16. Section of Fig 2-15

Both scrolls of *Along the River During Qingming Festival* and *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* represented panoramic scenes based on visual narrative instead of objective transcription of three-dimensional spaces. Along with a long and narrow scroll, the viewpoints are following the narration process, shifting upwards and downwards, frontwards and backward. It could not be a scientific system when the spatial depiction became less about recording a fixed view and more about presenting a space in midst of narrative. The moving focus expression actually is an attempt to organizing information as much as possible to show the richness of space in one picture. This concept is similar to cubism, but not in a geometric way whilst time and space are balanced by the design of the scroll. A panoramic view enables us to see the entire space in a god's view as well as to sense the flux of time. Along with a slowly unfurled scroll, we can still wander in the scenes with shifting focus whilst when the scroll is totally unrolled, an entire scene presents in front of us.

2.2.2 Maps as Paintings

Cartography in China

From early times, maps in China have served a variety of military, administrative, ritualistic and cosmological purposes. But the scholars who created maps saw their productions not only a reflection of science like astronomy and geography, but also cultural enterprise embracing philosophy, art, literature, and religion.

Traditional Chinese concepts of space emphasized a dynamism and fluidity that depended heavily on shifting vantage points and relativistic considerations of time. This attitude differed fundamentally from that of the West, where from about AD 1500 onward cartographers conceived space as bounded, static, and therefore organizable and measurable. (Smith, 1996, p. 3).

“It is not that Chinese mapping was nonmathematical, it was more than mathematical. (Harley & Woodward, 1994)” Traditional maps were products of scholarly enterprises, and under Chinese conceptions, they possessed intellectual value. Under those conceptions, a good cartographic image did not necessarily tell how far it was from one point to another. But it might tell us about such things as power, duty and emotion. Chinese cartography invested in physical space with deep, multivalent cultural meaning.

Development of cartography in China before the end of Qing Dynasty (1911) can be divided into four stages. The primary stage maps were simple sketches. From 475 BC to 265AD, maps developed to comprehensive reflections of the all-around conditions of the area, and an early symbolic system came into being. The third is the stage of mapping by a girding system from the Western Jin to the last years of the Ming dynasty i.e. 265-1600 AD. It is furnished with the sense of quantity and strict mathematical base. The fourth is the stage of measure field mapping by latitude and longitude measurements, which lasted from the last years Ming to the end of Qing dynasty.

Through traditional Chinese cartography, we can see the coexistence of two tendencies: one is pictorial maps that emphasize the form of the typography and objects and another is the application of a grid system called Ji Li Hua Fang. It was invented by ancient cartographer Peixiu (裴秀) by the end of the Han Dynasty. With this system, a fixed unit stands for an actual distance measured by Li¹⁴, and the dimensions of a given area could be set out. *Yu Ji Tu* (Fig 2-17) also called *Maps of the Tracks of Yu* was one of the most celebrated examples

¹⁴ The “li” is a traditional unit of distance and it's also known as the “Chinese mile”. One “li” is approximately 0.33 miles.

of the precocious development of the Chinese cartography.



Fig 2-17. *Yu Ji Tu* 禹迹图. 1136 A.D. Rubbing taken from a stone tablet in Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, China. (Yan, et al., 1998)

However, Peixiu's approach was not so commonly applied by Chinese people and in the map-making history, most of the maps are painted with the pictorial ideas, especially city maps. Only until the end of Ming and beginning of Qing dynasty, when Jesuits attempt to Westernize Chinese cartography, the technique have been greatly improved and maps became more accurate. When Matteo Ricci brought perspective to China, it was more than one thousand years after Peixiu's grid system of cartography.

Maps as paintings

It is sometimes hard to distinguish a painting from a map because Chinese landscape painting has a similar mechanical basis to the map making. Whether to depict a landscape scene or an urban one, it is endowed with the identical topographical concerns and the vast view in general. Both painting and maps have often resulted from the Chinese people's enduring fascination with their country's great mountains and rivers. Guo Xi said "In a thousand mile stretch of mountains it is impossible to appreciate all the wonders. In ten thousand miles of water, how can one appreciate all the beauties?¹⁵" In Guo's opinion, to paint the whole extent in one would simply produce a map.

Whereas maps orient us in the practical world; landscape painting guides us literarily in the imaginative world. The map indicates the actual bodily movement; landscape paintings orient imaginative body by eye's movement of shifting stances. One thing which differs painting-making from map-making is the conceptional selections since actually, we are not able to depict the whole scenes in one painting. Instead of a map aimed at depicting the reality, a painting is more similar to a mental map that involves our perceptual images of the real world. Therefore, to examine and appreciate a painting, the real distances and scales between buildings are less important as in maps. If we take a general view of the Chinese map's development from ancient to modern time, we will find that in the evolution process, most of the maps were even more similar to paintings.

The map of Wangchuan Villa by the Tang poet and painter Wang Wei (701-61) depicted the artist's well-known estate. It has generated some debate over its proper classification-landscape painting or map. As landscape painting, it makes no use of conventional symbols to represent geographic features but tries to approximate the actual appearance of those features. The painting's combination of pictorial and cartographic elements makes it suitable for classification as 'picture map'". (Harley & Woodward, 1994)

Like landscape painting, this map was also executed in a "moving focus" way. The points of interest are arranged by "space cells" so that space flows completely around them (Fig. 2-18). In addition, the ground plane is tilted, but mountains and trees are shown frontally. Also, each point of interest on the painting is labeled to suggest the map's function as an aid to understanding spatial relationship between objects.

¹⁵ Original Chinese texts are: "千里之山，不能尽奇；万里之水，岂能尽秀。太行枕华夏而面目者林虑，泰山占齐鲁而胜绝者龙岩，一概画之，版图何异？凡此之类，咎在于所取之不精粹也。" Translation from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Bush & Shih, 2012) p.181



Fig. 2-18. Attributed to Weng Zhengming (文征明, 1470-1559), *Scroll of Wang Chuan Villa* 綢川別業圖卷. The Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Eugene

By comparing a painting of Hangzhou's West Lake and a map of it (Fig 2-19, Fig 2-20), we can see, both embrace a panoramic view of the lake and in both paintings, the mountains are shown pictorially; villages, temples, and boats are drawn proportionally and vividly. But in the map of the West Lake (Fig 2-20), famous scenic spots are all positioned to scale, routes are emphasized, and curving forms and texts are labeled to objects for adding a layer of guiding information. In contrast, the Li Song painting (Fig 2-19), intended for contemplation, deliberately blurs the scenery with haze, making the picture less map like, more engaging as a painting.



Fig 2-19. Li Song 李嵩. *Painting of the West Lake* 西湖图卷. Southern Song dynasty (13th century). 26.7 x 85 cm. Shanghai Museum, China



Fig 2-20. *Map of West Lake* 西湖地图. 1265-1274. (Yan, et al., 1998)

Variable Viewpoints

By the moving focus in landscape painting, the eye could wander while the spectator also wandered in imagination through the landscape. Similar to landscape paintings, maps allow the viewer great freedom in appreciating the scene. Topographical maps often require the reader to change orientation as his eyes move across the surface. For example, in maps of landscape and geographic records, although mountains might be drawn in elevation, rivers may as well appear in a plan (Fig. 2-21). Even on grid maps, one frequently finds that the uniformity of the squares is broken up by pictorial elements (Fig. 2-22). The map combined the modern mapping technology and the traditional Chinese grid system.



Fig. 2-21. *Nanning fu tu* 南寧府圖. 1409. Woodblock. 14.3 x 19 cm. (Harley & Woodward, 1994, p. 145)

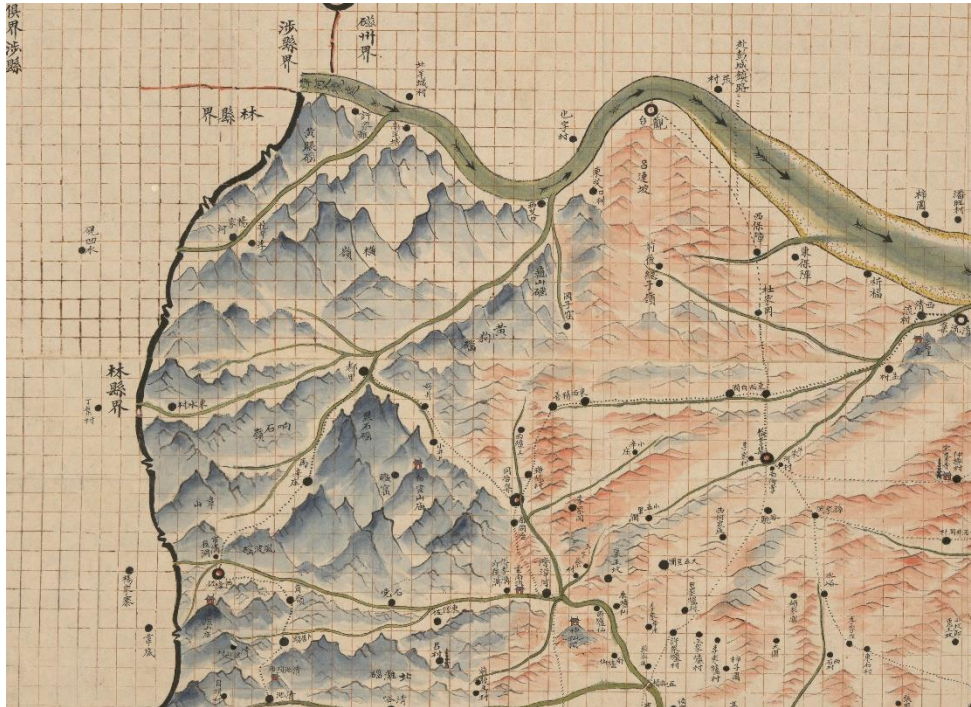


Fig. 2-22. Anonymous. *Map of Anyang County* 安阳县全境輿图 (detail). 1902. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/96685916/>.

Variable Viewpoints is also applied in city maps. For example, in *the Map of Ningcheng*, all the objects are represented on the same ground plane, but some are depicted obliquely, some in layout, and some in elevation, likewise occupying different ground planes, so that our visions are encouraged to rotate when we watch the map (Fig. 2-23).



Fig. 2-23. *Map of Ningcheng* 宁城图. Han dynasty. 129 x 159 cm. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Museum

The standpoint of the observer, instead of being fixed, is movable without restriction. Each portion of the composition is drawn from its own viewpoint. In these maps (Fig. 2-24 – Fig. 2-26), one must change the orientation of the map to view the objects correctly. The relative size of objects and their distance from one another, are usually dictated not by their actual dimensions but rather by the specific purpose for which the map is produced.

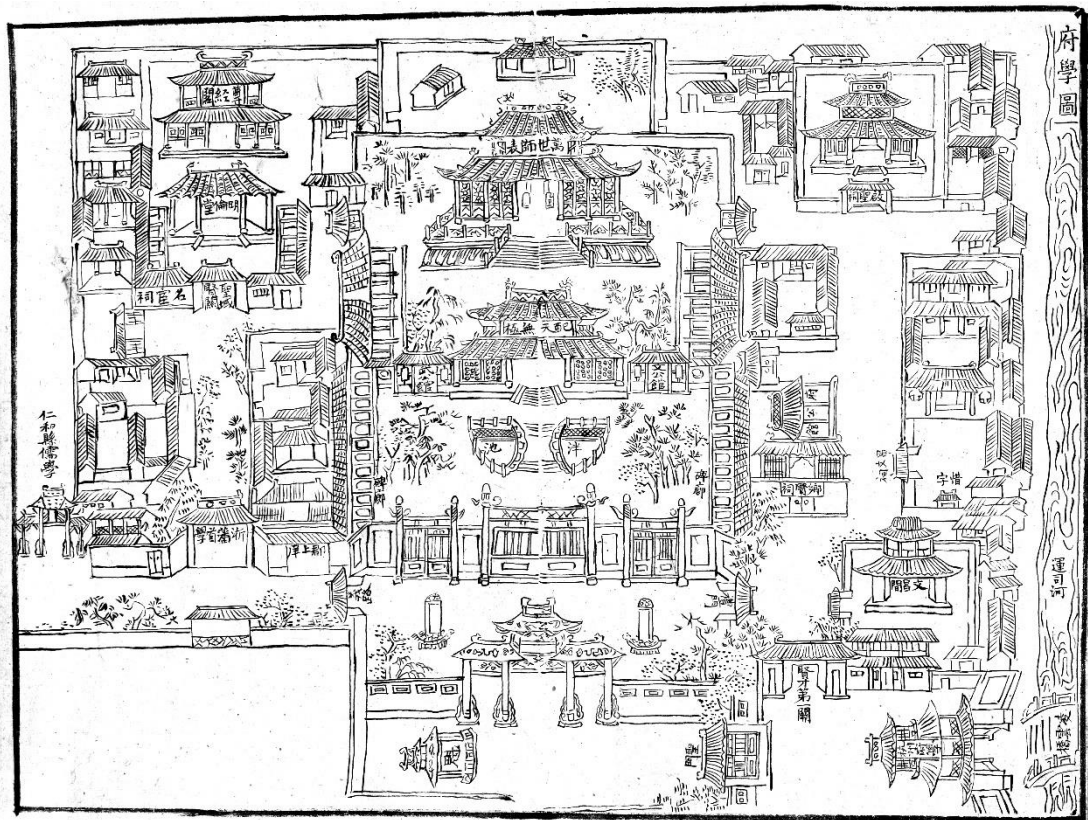


Fig. 2-24. 杭州府學圖 Prefectural School of Hangzhou from *Hang Zhou Fu Zhi* 杭州府志. c. 1900. 27×20cm. British Library:
<http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?docId=BLL01004856238>

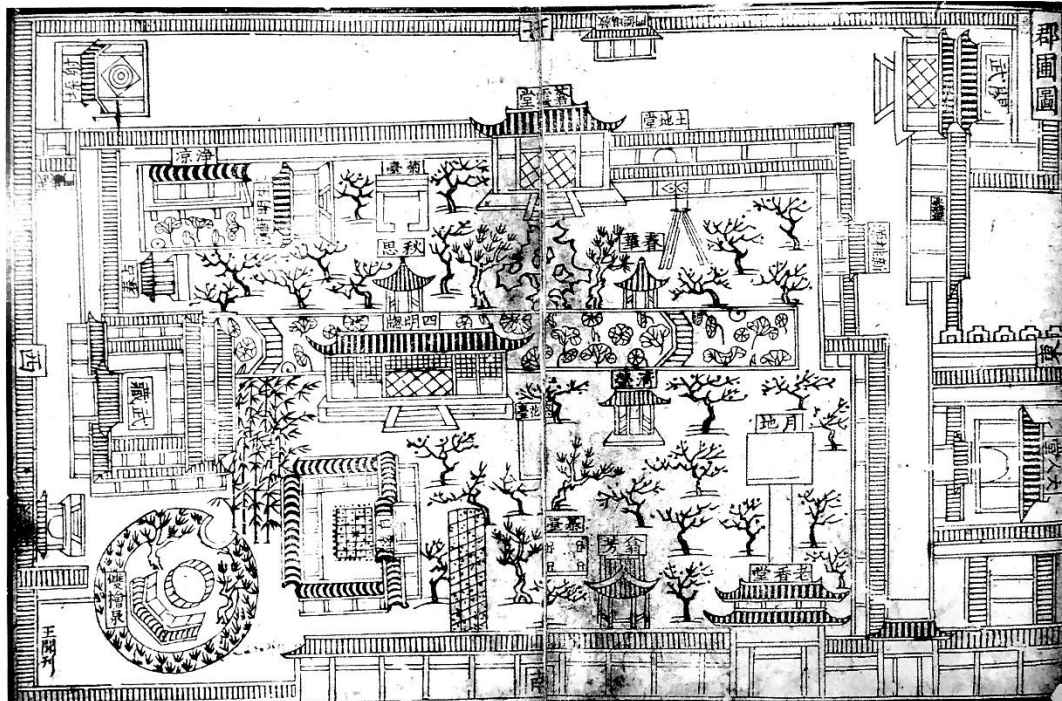


Fig. 2-25. Map of the Prefectural Garden 郡園圖. (Yan, et al., 1998)

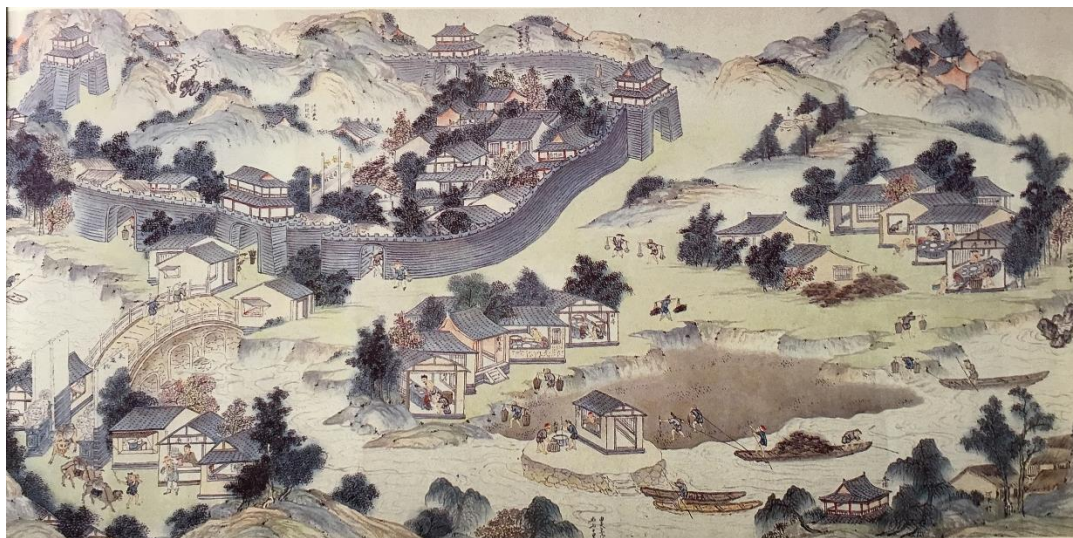


Fig. 2-26. One of Maps of the Salt Wells of Southern Yunnan 滇南鹽井圖之一. 1707. Chinese History Museum. (Yan, et al., 1998)

Texts and Maps

“Chinese maps encompassed not only numerical techniques but also humanistic concerns. The map allied itself with number and text. The two were not opposed—both were associated with value and power.” (Harley & Woodward, 1994)

Even if some maps were to be lost in the future, they could be reconstructed from the information in the writings. The map-makers see map and text as interchangeable. Chinese maps are similar to painting with the features of attached texts. Like certain kinds of Chinese paintings, Chinese maps often devote more space to the written text than to the actual image. Because deeply rooted in the Chinese culture, texts rather than images remained the primary source of representational authority for at least two thousand years. For example, in the map of *Sancai Yiguan Tu* and *Wu Bei Zhi*, we can find how Chinese characters compensate the composition of the map. And to read the characters, we need to follow the texts in various directions, move our focus according to the circular cosmos (Fig 2-27) or to the routes to the islands in the coastal areas (Fig 2-28). In this case, without the lengthy notes on the map itself, the map would be of little use for the navigational purpose.

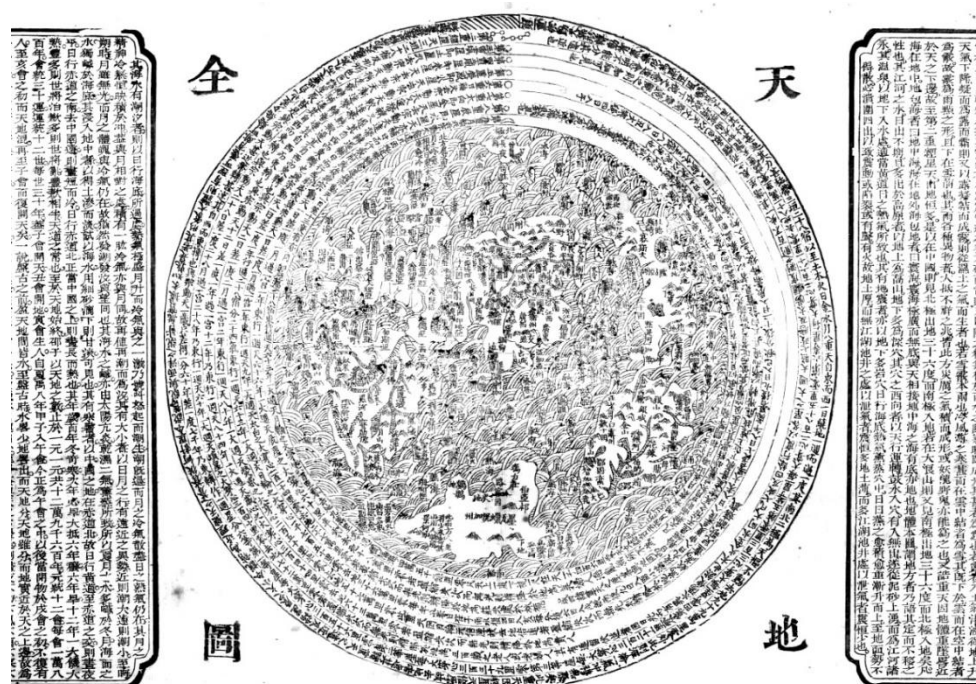


Fig 2-27. Lü, Fu and Weifan Lü. A comprehensive map of Heaven and Earth from *San cai yi guan tu* 三才一貫圖. 1722. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/89691027/>.

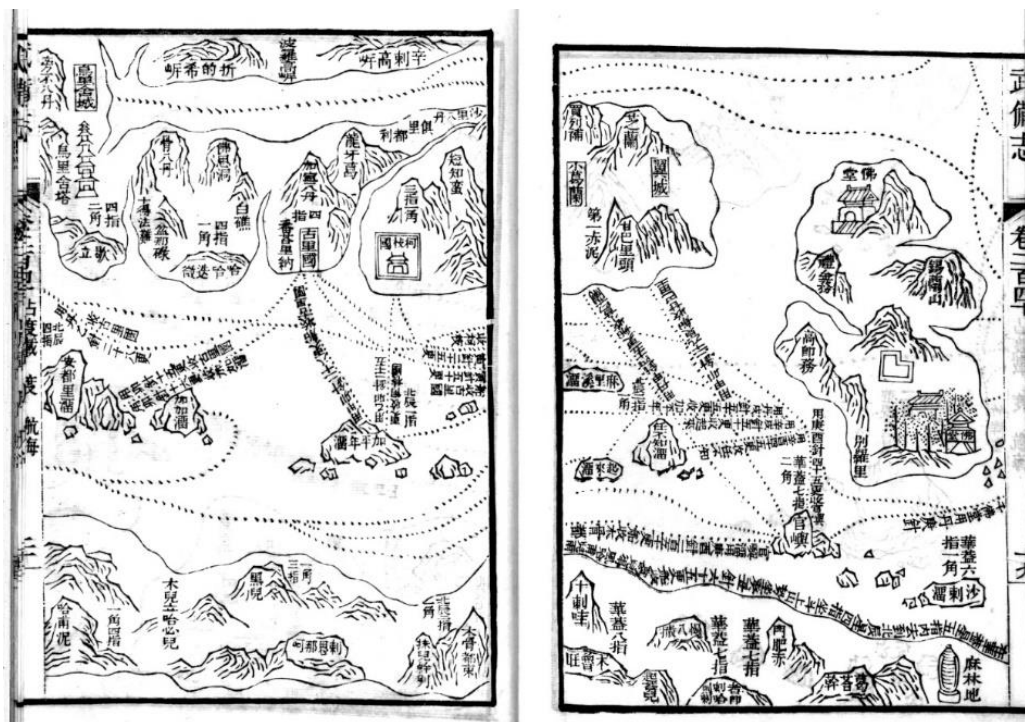


Fig 2-28. Mao, Yuanyi. *Wu Bei Zhi*. 1644. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004633695/>.

Although the Chinese invented woodblock printing during the Tang dynasty, the majority of maps were produced with a brush. Many of these documents were shaded with a variety of colors and adorned with substantial amounts of calligraphy, sometimes even poetry. Mountains and rivers were rendered with color likewise in landscape paintings.

Maps and Image of the City

In Chinese theories of representation, objective presentation does not preclude subjectivity. Representation of physical appearance was a means of understanding underlying realities, the innerness of both object and artist. A map, like a painting, is not just a record but is a product of the mapmaker's intuitive sense. It involves the abstraction of external details into something internal, a "mindscape". (Harley & Woodward, 1994)

What Kevin Lynch called "legibility" of the cityscape means "the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern". Comparing to a vast scale of architecture, "a city is a thing perceived only in course of long spans of time. (Lynch, 1960, pp. 1-2)" Chinese paintings of cityscapes on some extent have achieved to represent the long spans of time and the legibility of cities.

As individuals, it is hard for us to see the change in every corner of the city, let alone the experience of the whole city's change in history. But city maps enable us to see and experience our city in a general glance and if we put maps about one section of the city together, we will see the evolution of it. We can never overlook maps in the research of cities.

The situationist Guy Debord produced a cognitive map in 1957 under the title *The Naked City* (Fig 2-29, a) based on the most popular map *Plan of Paris* (Fig 2-29, b). It was fragmented into 19 discontinuous sections apart; however, the users of the map choose their own routes through the city by using a series of arrows that link parts of the city together. The mental map was an inventive method for exploring cities, aimed at helping pedestrians to become more aware of their overlooked urban surroundings and to see new possibilities of experiencing everyday life in the city. Users of the map *Plan of Paris* see the entire city laid out in an omnipresent view from timeless nowhere, whereas *The Naked City* organizes movements metaphorically around "psychogeography"¹⁶ hubs.

¹⁶ Guy Debord wrote the situationists' most influential manifesto of ideas under the title *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Spectacle means the artificial reality created by the dominance of mass media over society in which true everyday existence is hidden behind. As a way of reacting to the Spectacle, the concept of psychogeography was defined as "the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."

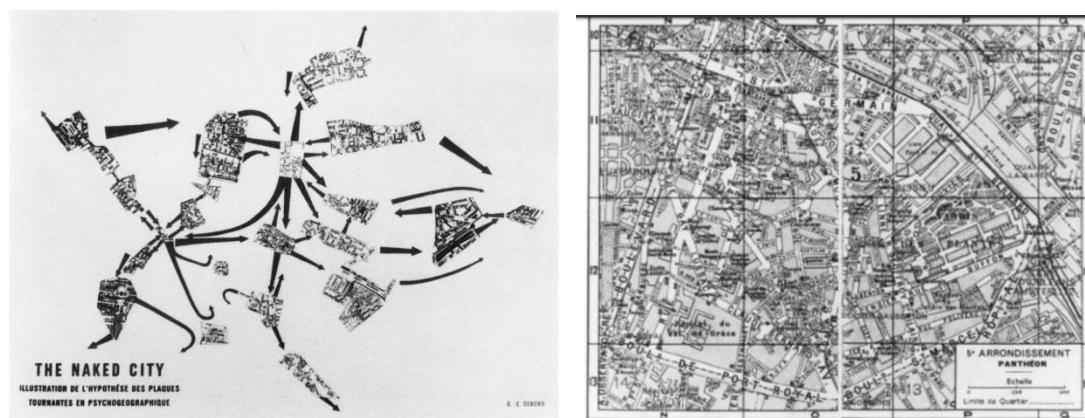


Fig 2-29. *The Naked City* (a) by Guy Debord. 1957. Ink on paper, 33.3 x 48.3 cm. Illustration from “The First Psychogeographic Exhibition” and Maps of 5th arrondissement from the *Plan de Paris* (b). Cited from the journal article: McDonough, Thomas F. “Situationist Space.” *October*, vol. 67, 1994, pp. 59–77.

Likewise, the craft map made in 1904, *Map of Zhifeng* (Fig 2-31, a) represented the Zhifeng village in a series of relationships between the buildings, the roads, the farmlands, the cemeteries, the trees, the mountains, etc. Comparing to the *Plan of Zhifeng* (Fig 2-31, b), although mountains and houses are drawn with facades and the scale is not correct in the craft map, we feel it even more reliable and tangible. The experience of the village is recorded by the relative position of the urban elements. Architect Wang Shu also takes this *Map of Zhifeng* as a reference to argue his view on the urban design¹⁷: “Many architects are culturally interested in this map but they are unable to realize its priority as an urban design diagram. That is due to the limitation of our knowledge system. (Wang, 2002, p. 143)” Wang Shu has seen a new method of making urban design and education from this map. He considered that all the elements, whether natural or artificial, with a name or without, are equivalent in this drawing, together they made an inclusion of this village. It is not something that could be exactly defined as the professional papers and regulations do, but “a certain and poetic truth expressed by all the elements together – even it is a kind of annoying contradiction (Wang, 2002, p. 138)”. In this understanding, the difference between *The Naked City* and the *Plan de Paris*, or between *Map of Zhifeng* and *Plan of Zhifeng* lies in the difference between fragmentation and unity, or between narrative and description. These movements constitute narratives of inclusion rather than presenting the city by fragments; by a situated subject based on perception instead of the object of a totalized depiction.

¹⁷ From the book *The Beginning of Design* by Wang Shu. Simplified by the chapter ‘The City where Time Pauses’ of Wang Shu’s PhD dissertation

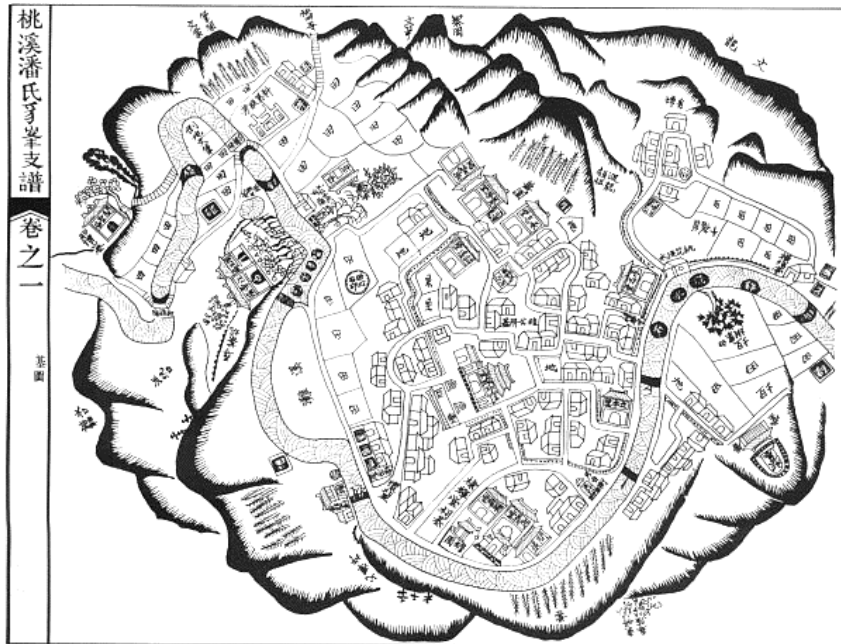


Fig 2-30. *Map of Zhifeng*. 1904. Cited from the book *Zhifeng Village* by Gong Kai. 1999. Nanjing: Southeast University Press. pp. 3-5

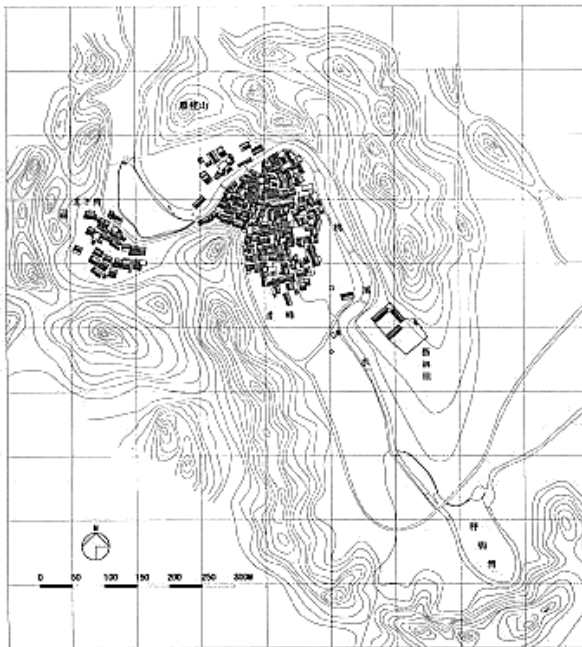


Fig 2-31. *Plan of Zhifeng*. Cited from the book *Zhifeng Village* by Gong Kai. 1999. Nanjing: Southeast University Press. pp. 3-5

Conclusion

By the narrative of space, Chinese painting aims at the wandering experience. Landscape painting let viewers wander in nature by the format of the scroll and a scheme called “three distances”. The scroll enables the narration to progress without losing the spatial depth. “Three distance”, more than a technique of pictorial composition, also conveys the traditional conceptions of mental space. In cityscape paintings, observers can roam along streets or rivers by the progression of urban scrolls or picture maps. Moving focus and multiple stations are also applied as in landscape paintings. Chinese paintings on various motifs enable the spectator to “wander” in them because, in this kind of paintings, artists conceived the sense of time by indicating us to get a general glance. Chinese painting balanced time and space successfully. However, even maps are not accurate representations in Chinese painting since rather than landscape or cityscape, painting involves artist’s mindscape. In this sense, the environments depicted in paintings become uncertain and unmeasurable, and thus poetic.

Chapter3

Dwelling in Chinese Paintings: The Embodiment of In-between Space

In chapter 2, we have seen Chinese landscape and cityscape paintings in an overall view on the general compositions. In both kinds of paintings, the scheme of moving focus enables us to wander in a painting like progressing on a journey. In this chapter, we will enter the same paintings discussed in the former chapter, but by a closer examination at the human figures' habitations as well as the natural and artificial environments they live in. The aim is to find out the identical graphical languages spoken by Chinese paintings. Gradually, the cultural items implied in them will be revealed by thinking about how to view these paintings.

3.1 Space of Utopia: Dwelling in Nature

3.1.1 The Interaction between Human and Nature

The country is shattered, But the mountains and the rivers remain!

- Chinese poet Du Fu

Landscape elements first appeared in China as background settings for narrative as commonly seen around the world. But later, when nature became the main subject of landscape painting, Chinese artist's intention was still more than to grasp the beauty of nature. The Chinese landscape painting expressed a profound belief in communion with nature, a cosmic vision of man's harmonious existence in a vast but orderly universe. "From a very early time, a mountain is imagined as an earthly paradise, the abode of the immortals, a spiritual refuge where moral values can be cultivated, an ancient utopia free of warfare and social turmoil." (Fong, 1992, p. 71) Notably, the development of landscape painting occurred during China's long intervals of political disunity, when poets and artists, disenchanted with the world of human affairs, turned away to seek a realm of spiritual enlightenment. After the political fall of the Tang dynasty, in the early tenth century, many scholars retreated to the mountains. Living in secluded hermitages or Buddhist temples, they attended to their self-cultivation, studying, painting and thinking about nature and the universe. From the Tang to the Yuan dynasty, the attitude towards landscape generally shifted to a spiritual domain imbued with human emotion and self-expression.

Mountains in paintings are closely related with human's ideal places, whether as reclusion from the unsatisfied reality or as somewhere to start a spiritual self-cultivation. A man was never treated individually or as essentially different from all other created things. Such a view in China grew into an ideal of harmonious co-operation with nature and this belief has become a central philosophy for more than two thousand years in China. As shown in paintings for scholars' literary gathering (Fig 3-1), landscape conveys the artist's ideal-mode of a creative artificiality. It is deeply based on the artist's own life experience and also largely affected by the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism¹.

¹ Confucianism and Taoism are the oldest Chinese systems of ethics and philosophy. The sphere of Confucianism is the human world and the social obligations and Taoism instead, conforms to the underlying pattern of the universe. Buddhism emphasis on human suffering and the illusory nature of



Fig 3-1. Attributed to Zhou Wenju (周文矩). *Literati garden* 文苑图. Tenth-century. Ink and color on silk. 37.4 x 58.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

Such paintings of scholars' gathering are commonly seen in China because these scholar-elites led a long-lost tradition called literati culture. Not merely literate in the poetry, history, and fiction, these scholars are also keen art historians and painters. Their gatherings usually occur in the wide out-of-doors instead of the interior to suggest the harmonious relationship between human and nature. Moreover, scholars are normally officials themselves. Their painting is also called *literati painting* (*wen ren hua* 文人画). In paintings, they also use natural settings as shelters to protect themselves from bad conditions – not only of the natural ones, also of the political ones. In a poetic vision, although the places depicted in these landscape paintings may not really exist, the ancient painters' long lasted mode of ideal dwelling places can still be found in the habitations of landscape paintings (Fig 3-2).

the world. In Chinese philosophy these three thoughts mingled freely to a harmonized synthesis of philosophy. (Fong, 1992, p. 40)



Fig 3-2. Li Gonglin (李公麟). *Dwelling in the Longmian Mountain Villa* 龙眠山庄图 (detail). Northern Song dynasty. Handscroll, ink and color on silk. Palace Museum, Taipei.

3.1.2 Hidden behind the Cosmic Mountains

The early Chinese regarded their own positions in nature so modestly that they think however successful and prosperous they are, they are still obliged to fit the great and impersonal order of the universe. On this sense, Chinese landscape painting became a cosmic diagram, revealing a profound belief of the vast world and of man's harmonious existence within it. During the early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), monumental landscape paintings had become the official idiom by the influence of Neo-Confucianism (Fong, 1992). The Fan's and Guo's two well-known paintings discussed in the former chapter are two representative masterpieces of monumental landscape paintings.

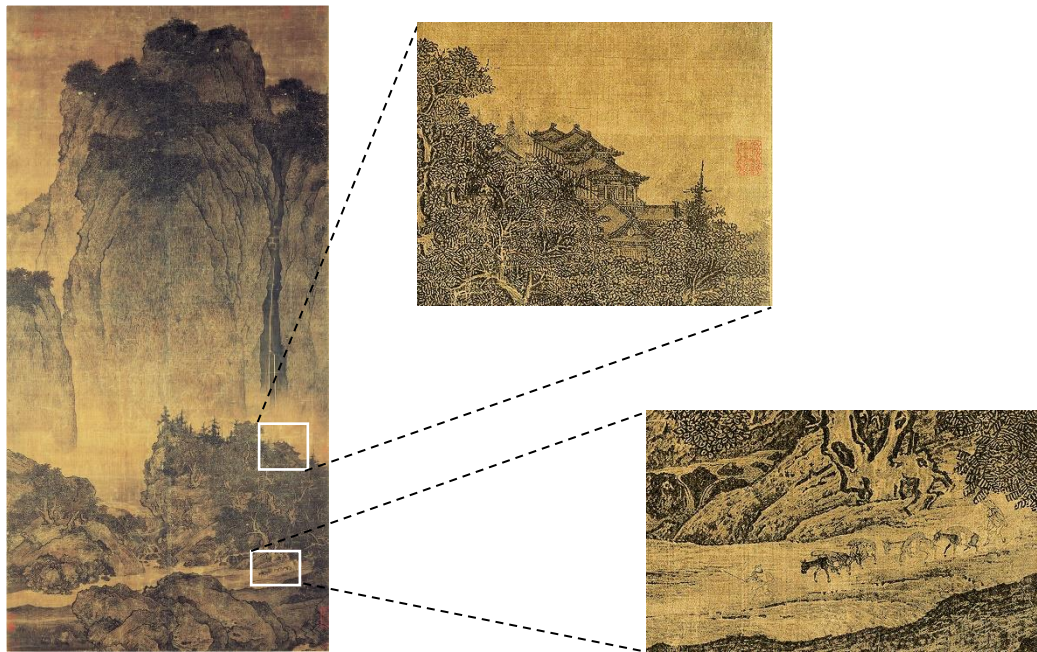


Fig 3-3. Details of *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains* (Fig 2-6)

If we move our focus from the huge peaks to the right part of the same painting (Fig 3-3), we can find some extraordinary details: a half-hidden temple is facing the water flow and two tiny travelers are driving mules. Despite the hardly seen human traces, the rest is untouched nature. By meditating on the contrast between nature's vastness and human's minuteness, we can grasp the true essence of this painting – as human beings, we are nothing special to other creations of nature.

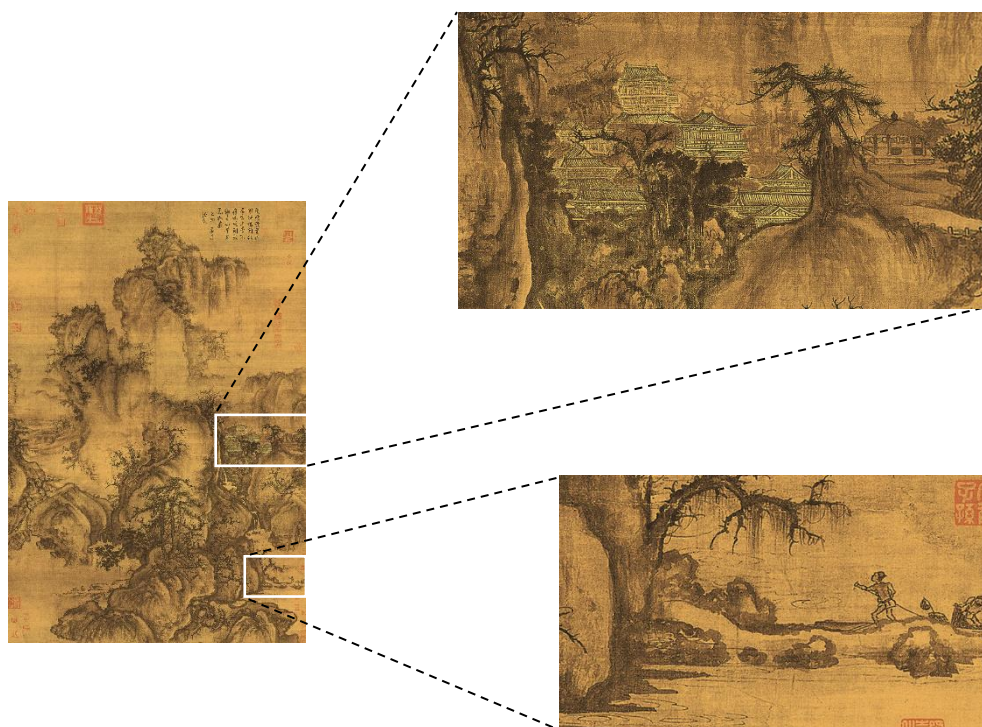


Fig 3-4. Details of *Early Spring* (Fig 2-7)

Similarly, in the right part of Guo Xi's *early spring*, we can see a group of temples setting over the waterfall on the mountainside and a tiny human figure trying to get there by driving his boat. But comparing to Fan Kuan's painting, Guo's painting is more expressive and emotional. Rather than to describe the landscape realistically, it is engaged with the Taoist belief in the magical powers of seasonal renewal and human's pursuit to achieve the harmonious dwelling within it.

In a hanging scroll of this kind, despite the application of "three distances" for placing mountains, there is also a conventional mode of composition for placing buildings. Normally a temple is set on the mountaintop as a spiritual goal to achieve, while bridges and pavilions are placed on the foot and on the middle side of the mountain, as somewhere to have a meditating rest during the long journey and somewhere to get prepared for the final target (Fig 3-5). Where buildings are placed are also where our viewpoints are set. Following the indirect route, your focus will move from the mountain foot to the mountaintop. Actually, when visiting a real Chinese mountain, one can find the same kind of building compositions and get the same experiences of climbing to the mountaintop – somewhere far from the reality and closed to the ideality.



Fig 3-5. Position of buildings in hanging scrolls. Left: Li Cheng (李成, 919 - 967). *Buddhist Temple in Mountain* 晴峦萧寺图. Ink on silk, 111.76 x 55.88 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. Right: Yan Wengui (燕文贵, ca. 967-1044), *Pavilions Among Mountains and Streams* 溪山楼观图. Song Dynasty (960-1279). Hanging Scroll, ink on silk, 103.9 x 47.4 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei

Buildings in the handscrolls

In the first landscape handscroll discussed in chapter 2, *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains* (Fig 2-1), we can also see numerous villages and cottages with huts (Fig 3-7). Chinese historian of architecture Liu Dunzhen and Fu Xinian had profoundly studied the buildings' layouts and structures in this painting and found out many useful clues for the architectural style of Song dynasty. However, except for their historic values for the archeological research of Song period, I think the habitations in this painting are also keys to discover the poetics in landscape paintings, depending on how we view them. The key is to transfer our focuses from one cottage itself to one that placed within its surroundings.

Although the buildings in this painting are painted with exquisite details, providing to a more general view by treating them as parts that serve of the panoramic composition of the landscape, the architectures in this painting are indicators for the multiple viewpoints. For example, the open gates of architecture in a., c. and f. direct our eyes from the lower part upward to the middle side of the mountains. Similarly, the bridge-like houses, standing on the waterfall emphasized the height of the mountain. The water dwellings b., e., g., and h. are guiding our eyes from the banks to the rivers and from one mountain to another. Though the houses are mostly imagined by the painter Wang Ximeng, the relations between artificial settings and natural ones seem real and reasonable. Architecture in landscape paintings is telling us how to dwell within nature poetically – just as Heidegger said, “the bridge gathers to itself in its own way earth and sky, divinities and mortals.” When we treat buildings as something included in nature, men are also included by their dwellings in the vast universe.

Fig 3-6. General-scale sections of *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountain*. Including Architecture, a-h from Fig 3-7, as indicators for moving focuses. (pictures on p. 70-71)



a



b



c



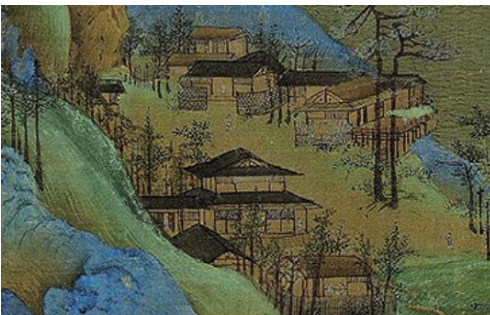
d



e



f

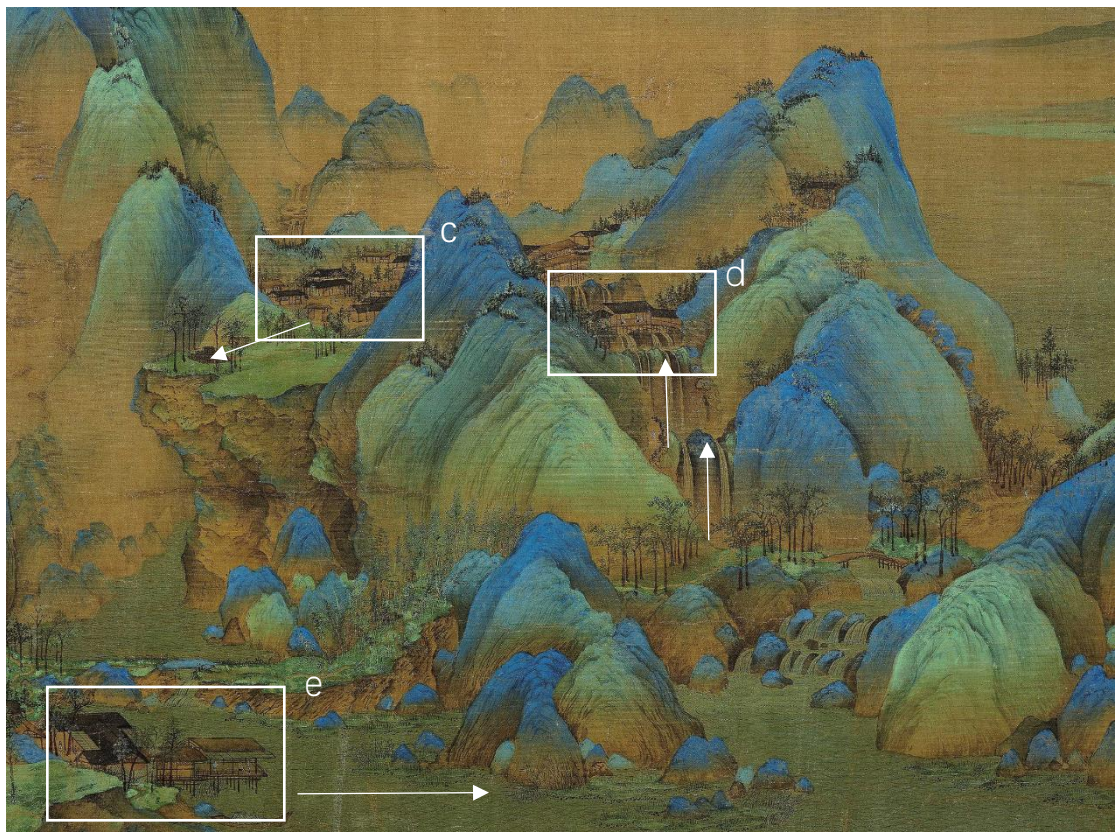
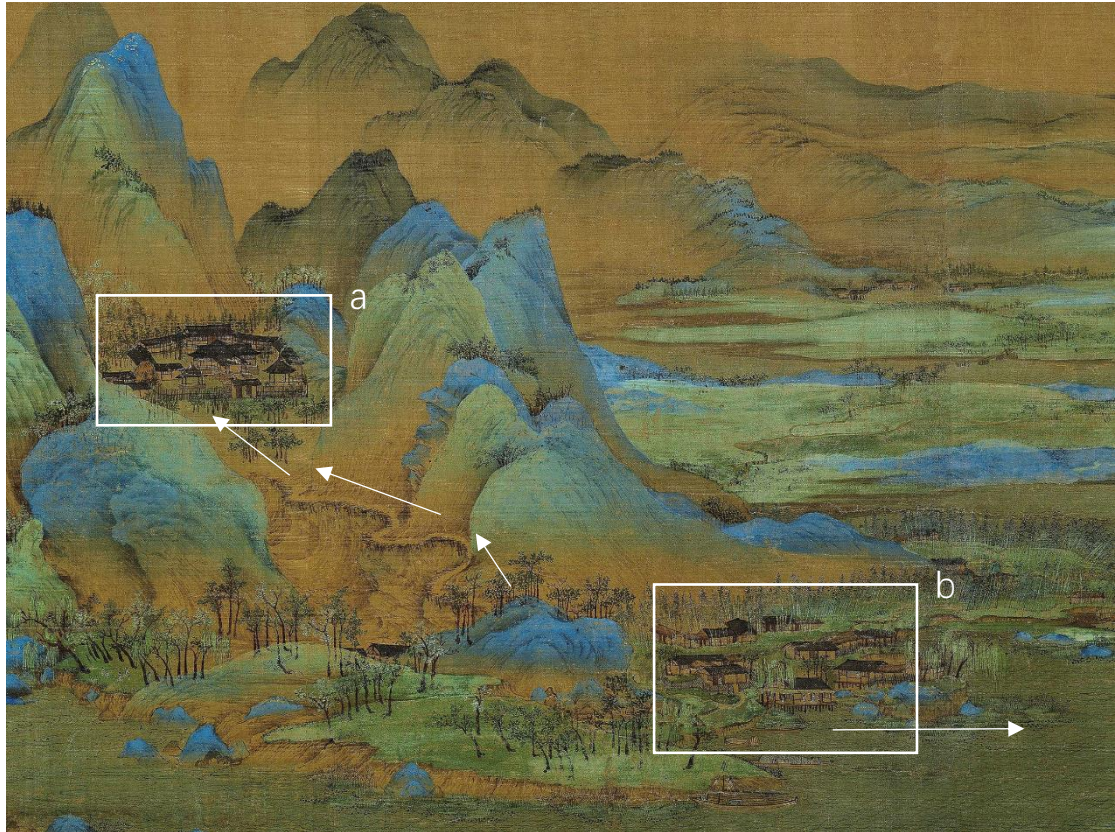


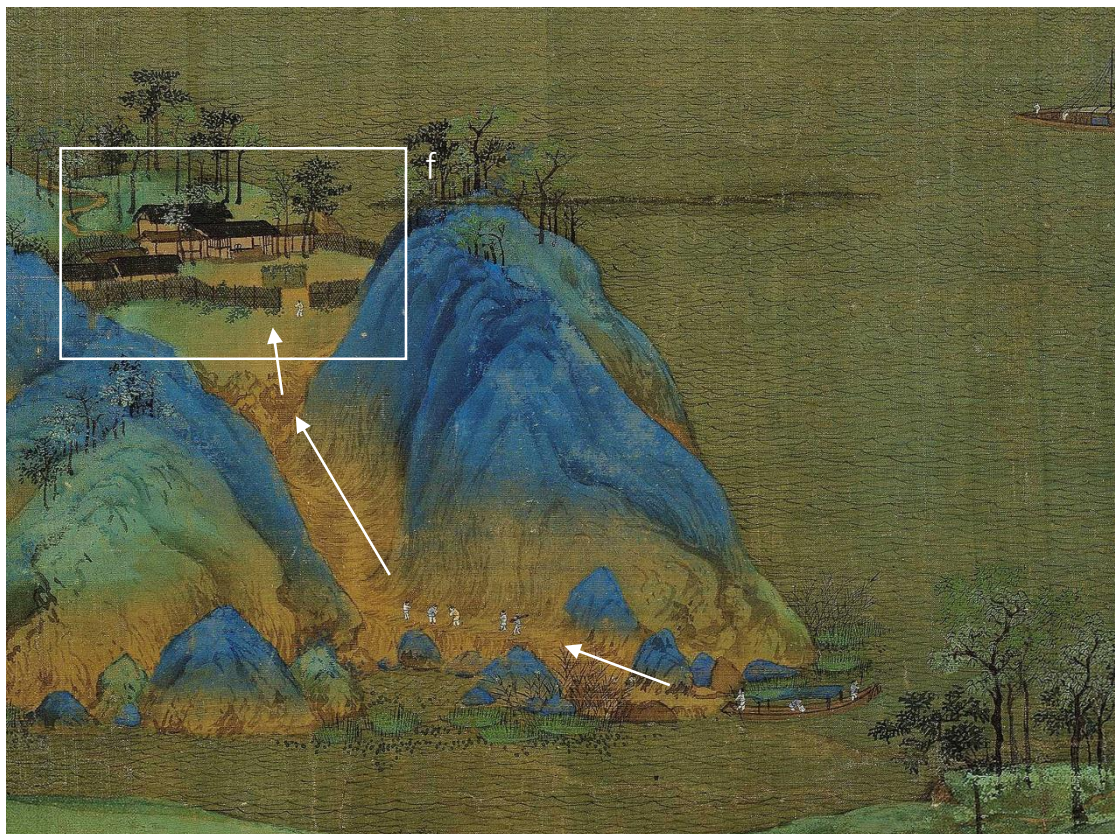
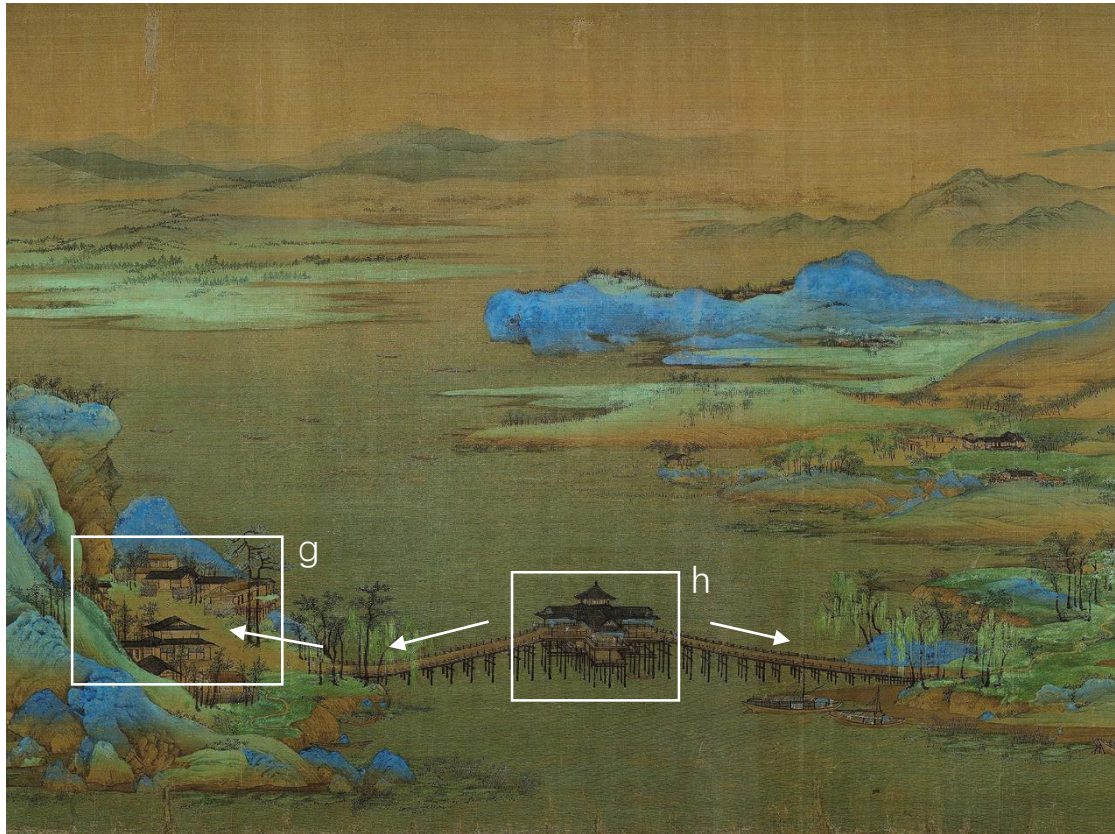
g



h

Fig 3-7. Details of buildings in the painting *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountain* (Fig 2-1)





3.1.3 Retreating and Reclusive Dwelling

Monumental landscape painting began its decline in the late eleventh century. When the Northern Song court was in bitter struggles over new reform policies, painters increasingly tended to express their ambitions and emotions in landscape paintings. In the twelfth century, even an entire generation of talented scholars, philosophers and painters were exiled for political reasons. As the response to political setbacks and career disappointments, scholar-officials chose a life of seclusion and self-cultivation – retreat to the mountains. However, confined by their duties, some of them could not actually dwell in mountains, they have to employ the image of reclusion through three perfections – poetry, calligraphy, and painting. In the occasion of seclusion paintings, we can find numerous examples in the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasty. Following the same meaning, the compositions are normally similar – a spatial schema of reclusive dwelling in mountains.

For example, in the painting *Riverbank* (Fig 3-8), the mountain boulders are stacked diagonally across the picture plane and the mountain slope in the upper-right corner suggests a structure that continues on into another space. *Riverbank* shares the theme of reclusion with another important landscape painting datable to the tenth century: *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (Fig 3-9). The pictorial structures follow the meaning: “One closed-in part containing the recluse’s dwelling and representing the idea of seclusion, and one part that opens outward signifying the option of venturing out, when one pleases, into the great world.” (Cahill, 1999, p. 41)

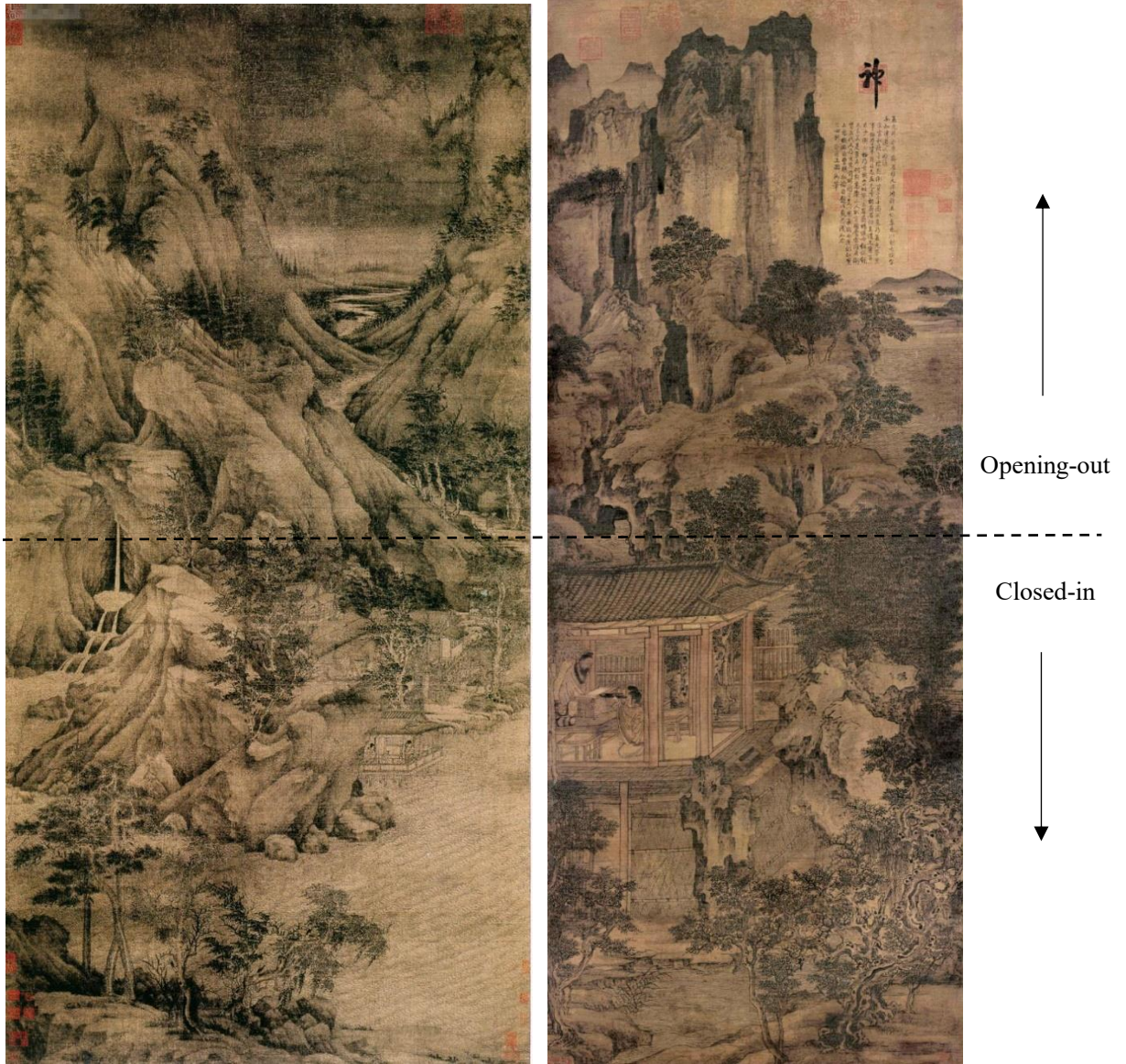


Fig 3-8. Attributed to Dong Yuan (董源, active ca. 930s-60s). *Riverbank* 溪岸图. Hanging Scroll. Ink and color on silk, 221 x 109 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (left)

Fig 3-9. Wei Xian (卫贤, active ca. 960-75). *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* 高士图. Hanging scroll. Ink and color on silk. 134.5 x 52.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. (right)

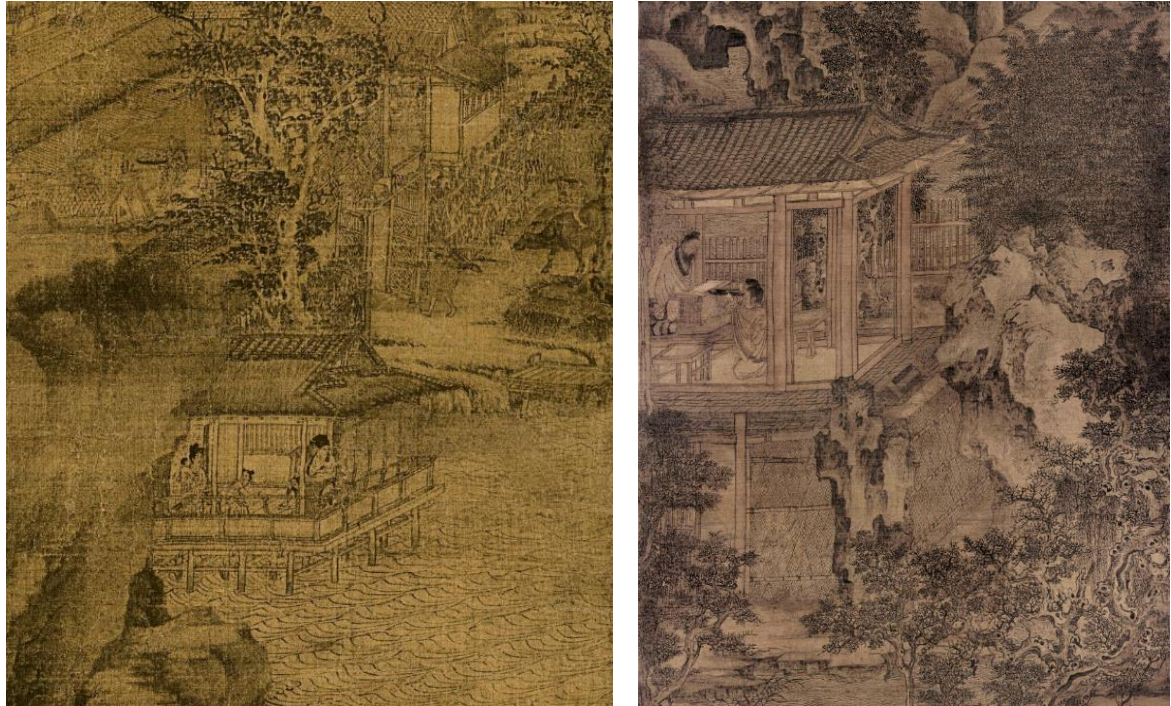


Fig 3-10. Dwellings in the painting. Details from Fig 3-8. and Fig 3-9.

Human activities in the paintings also contribute to the complex narrative structure. Comparing to the tiny figures in a monumental landscape, the humans here appear to be relatively larger in scale. In the pavilions of both paintings, joined by their families, the scholars are leaning on writing tables doing self-cultivation (Fig 3-10). Interestingly, in the painting of Dong Yuan, the darkening sky, the bent trees and the travelers who are seeking for shelters in thatch cloaks – are announcing the approach of a storm. The pavilion more than a shelter for a storm is also a metaphoric sanctuary from political chaos. (Hearn & Fong, 1999)

In the fourteenth-century Yuan dynasty, after the Mongol conquest of the Song dynasty, many of the leading landscape painters were literati who did not serve in office because they did not want to serve the conquerors. Their political statement drove to a Renaissance of literati landscape paintings. The cultivated landscape embodied both learned references to the styles of their earlier masters, and through calligraphic brushwork, the inner spirit of the artists. Going beyond representation, scholar-artists imbued their paintings with personal feelings. The Yuan dynasty master Huang Gongwang (1269-1354), for example, in his handscroll *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, casts himself as a recluse scholar sitting in a pavilion near three upright pine trees that symbolized the gentleman's honest and indifferent character. (Fig 3-11).



Fig 3-11. The painter Huang Gongwang casts himself as a recluse scholar sitting in a pavilion along three pine trees. (Detail from Fig 2-9)

Another master painter of the Yuan, Wang Meng (ca.1308-1385) re-creates the vision of reclusion with his personal graphic language. Wang Meng spent much of his life in retirement, residing at Yellow Crane Mountain on the northeast of Hangzhou, and he made reclusion one of the dominant themes of his art.

In Wang Meng's paintings, the rustic hermitages are built individually or around courtyards. Human figures are lively inhabited in the paintings: Master gentlemen gaze out from prominent positions at the front gate; a servant offers herbs to a crane in the courtyard, and other approaches two deer; women are hidden on the backyards or behind mountains; a fisherman sits on a hanging board attached to a cottage...The simplicity of the figures and dwelling, protected by overarching mountains and trees evoke a dreamlike vision of reclusion (Fig 3-12 and Fig 3-13).

During the Yuan dynasty, a large category of reclusion paintings is made for portrayals of people's retirement dwellings, or villas, with the surrounding sceneries. These paintings were painted for presentation to a person, either by the artist himself or by someone who commissioned the picture. Wang Meng depicted scholars in their retreats, creating imaginary portraits that capture not the physical likeness of a person or place but rather an interior world of shared associations and ideals.



Fig 3-12. Wang Meng (王蒙, ca. 1308 – 1385). *Simple Retreat* 素庵图. Yuan dynasty. (ca. 1370). Hanging scroll. Ink and color on paper, 136.5 x 44.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig 3-13. Wang Meng (王蒙) *Thatched Cottage in Autumn Mountains* 秋山草堂图, Yuan Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 123.3 x 54.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei

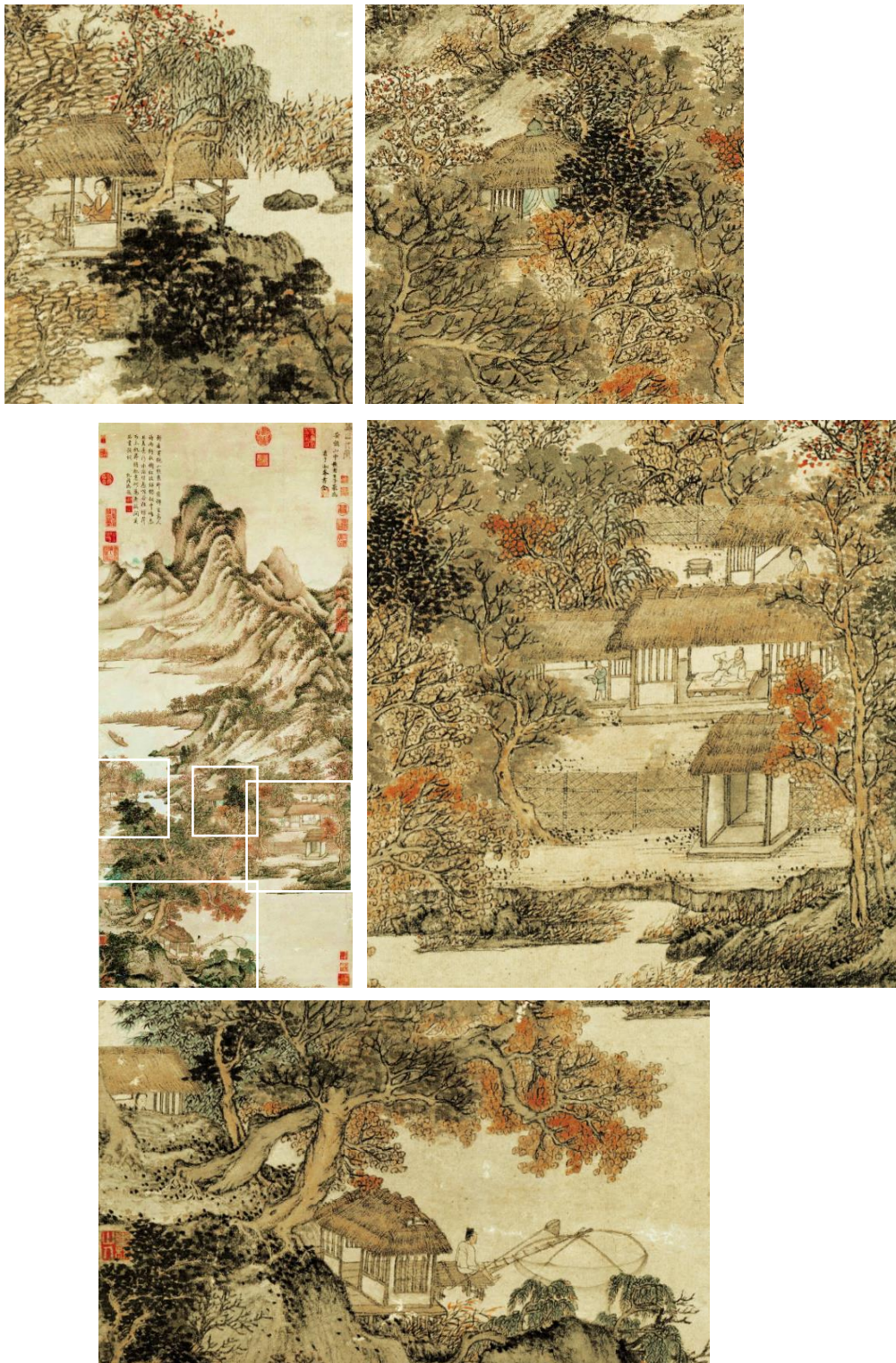




Fig 3-14. Ni Za (倪瓒). *Empty Pavilion in a Pine Grove* 松林亭子图, the Yuan dynasty. Dated 1354. Hanging Scroll, ink on silk, 83.4 x 52.9 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

And artist Ni Zan, made the same type of painting for scholars but in another personal style. in *Empty Pavilion in a Pine Grove* (Fig 3-14), he paints a landscape with an empty pavilion that represents the artist's abandoned home in a war-torn world. Ni Zan revealed the meaning of the pavilion in his poem upright: "The pavilion stands under a tall pine tree; the recluse has departed after nightfall. When the morning comes, he shall return to dry his freshly washed hair in the rising sun." And on the right: "In the mountain there is an old thatched house, seeing it makes him think of returning home. Above all, he loves the tall pine tree, but the morning sun has not yet risen." The poetics is evoked by the poetry, as well as the images of the painting.

Ni Zan, in fact, seems to have painted more or less the same scene over and over (Fig 3-15. and Fig 3-16), giving it different names to present to different people as portraits of their retirement dwellings. The intent was not to show how the place really looked in realistic pictures. He repeated the composition of trees by the lakeshore as a symbol of himself and his world, creating serial images as a kind of journal in which he recorded his thoughts and impressions. (Fong, 1992, p. 485)



Fig 3-15. Ni Zan (倪瓚). *The Rongxi Studio* 容膝齋圖. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 74.7 x 35.5 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei (left)



Fig 3-16. Ni Zan (倪瓚). *The Zizhi Mountain Studio* 紫芝山房圖. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 85.5x34.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei (right)

Peach-blossom Spring theme

Another kind type of reclusive paintings does not represent a particular villa, but the general idea of seclusion. The “Peach-blossom Spring” theme is the most representative one. It is based on the story told by the fourth-century poet Tao Yuanming². In the story, a fisherman loses his way and finds himself in the land of peach blossoms, a realm where time has been suspended. The villagers he meets there are descendants of those who had escaped from the ravages of the war during the years of the Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.). Painting depicting this theme often follow a similar composition (Fig 3-17 and Fig 3-18): “the closed-in part representing the hidden valley, where people who fled from a tyrant century earlier have been living since then in peace, and the opening-out part signifying the fisherman’s passage up the stream from the town where he started his journey. (Cahill, 1999, p. 43)”

But when the same theme of reclusiveness is depicted in a handscroll (Fig 3-19), the architectures in landscape, more than the peaceful dwelling of the seclusive village in the peach blossom, also becomes narrative vehicles. Two dwellings are located facing rivers, to finish a section and start another, just like the cave-entrance and the cliff-exist, to start or put an end to the journey (Fig 3-20).

² Tao Yuanming, is a fourth-century poet who retired from an official post to live on his farm in the country and write poems about the pleasures of the recluse’s life. He is presentative as hermits who stay out of office by their “homecoming”.

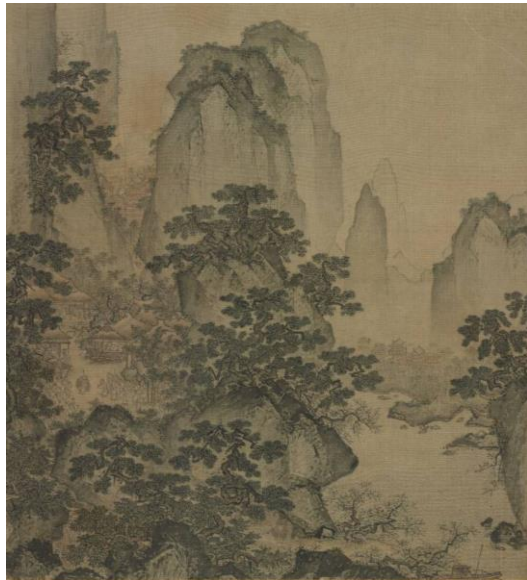


Fig 3-17. Attributed to Shi Rui (石芮). *Peach Blossom Spring* 桃源图. 1400s. Album painting in ink and slight color on silk. 24.6 x 22.1 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art.



Fig 3-18. Zhang Daqian (张大千), *Peach Blossom Spring* 桃源图, 1982, splashed ink and colour on paper, hanging scroll, 209 x 92 cm

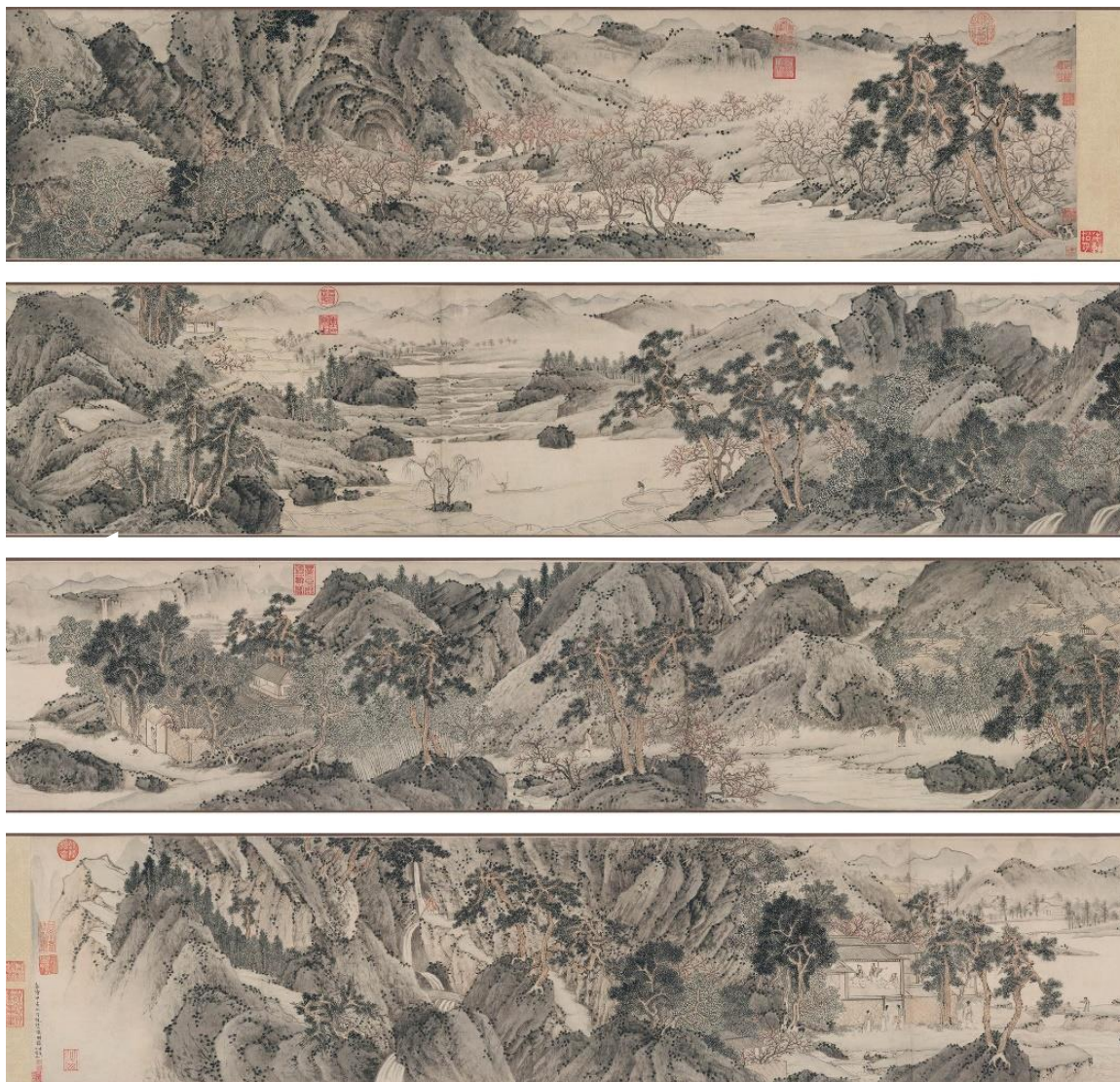


Fig 3-19. Wen Zhengming (文征明, 1470–1559), *Peach Blossom Spring* 桃源图. Ming Dynasty. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 32 x 578.3 cm, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang



Fig 3-20. Details of Fig 3-19

3.1.4 Living in Garden likewise Dwelling in Nature

Building is a form of dwelling, and dwelling is a form of thinking.

——Heidegger

The literati men build dwellings of seclusion in landscape paintings as well as in real gardens. Both convey the wish to live in a man-made world free of social turmoil. One of the most famous examples is Wang Chuan Villa made during the Tang dynasty. It was located along the Wang River some thirty miles north of the Tang capital by Wang Wei (AD701-761) who was a painter, calligrapher, musician and also a famous poet. The real villa disappeared but the scroll painting of Wang Chuan Villa still recorded Wang Wei's retreat in transforming natural settings artfully into human environments. Wang Wei was also credited for the invention of scroll since we can still see space-cells linked to each other in the painting (Fig 3-21). The garden and the scroll convey the same experience over durational time and the garden becomes a three-dimensional walking experience through the progression of the scroll. The painting Wang Chuan Villa was endlessly copied and recopied, not only because of the charm of the real place but also for the spiritual character of the artist, who was a model of a cultivated gentleman for future generations. Wang Wei's calligraphy, poetry, painting, and garden altogether reflected the quality of the man. Every Chinese scholar would like to see something of the Wang Chuan around him. (Keswick, 1980)



Fig 3-21. Wang Wei's reclusive garden Wangchuan Villa. (Sections from Fig 2-18)

In Song dynasty, when the scholar-gardener Sima Guang suffered at court, he had chosen to retire and devoted himself to write a Chinese history book for the future generation. To relax from his labors, he built a garden in the middle of Luoyang city, called *The Garden for Solitary Enjoyment*. In his garden, we can see the scholar Sima Guang reading in a pavilion surrounded by pine trees; fishing on an island in the center of the fish pond; planting medicines, flowers, and bamboos; looking out to distant mountains on a terrace beyond his garden wall (Fig 3-22). Curiously, by tying together their leafy tips, he made a living tent from the bamboos he had planted in a ring. This may be the original design mode of pavilions in Chinese gardens. By simple and slight actions, the scholar has wisely taken full use of the natural environment for his cultivation and contemplation.

Fig 3-22. Qiu Ying (仇英). *The Garden for Solitary Enjoyment* 独乐园. handscroll, ink and slight color on silk, Image: 28 x 519.8 cm. John L. Severance Fund 1978.67 (Pictures on p. 87-88)





The number of private gardens, especially in the region around Suzhou in southern China, grew steadily after the twelfth century. However, it is impossible to see a garden through Chinese eyes without having some appreciation of Chinese landscape paintings. Both were alternative solutions into a microcosm of nature when complete freedom in nature was hard to realize. (Keswick, 1980) Almost all garden makers were also painters. For example, it is said that painters referred before, Ni Zan and Weng Zhengming also participated in the garden design of the Shi Zi Lin (Stone Lion Grove) and the Zhuo Zheng Yuan (Foolish Politician's Garden), which still exist today as two of the most famous gardens in Suzhou. When garden designers looked at real mountains they saw them through eyes educated by thousand years of landscape painting. For them, to be in the garden is like to live in the painting, for the same mental concerns.

In private gardens, even a single rock may represent a complete range of mountains with their essence concentrated. In the same microcosmic view, a landscape painting and a garden painting can be similar. But what differs is that in gardens, there is a closing wall around in most of the cases. The walls are to eventually block out the surrounding human activities so that the inside world could be turned back again to a peaceful world of nature. Despite the walls, depictions of gardens may also include the elements of fantastic *Taihu Rocks*³ (太湖石) or the artificial mountains, as we can see in the garden paintings (Fig 3-24). Actually, artists also try to blur the limitations between a garden painting and a landscape painting by deliberately playing with the relation between the natural and artificial elements. Therefore, it is sometimes hard for the viewers to distinguish between a real hill and an artificial mountain in paintings, as well as between a tree inside the garden and one outside it. Is one representing the other, or in fact both are wild, or both of them are artificial? Artists express their ideal mode of dwelling in nature through imaginary gardens since even if a garden painting describes an existing garden, they are not exactly the same.

Artist Wen Zhengming, calling himself always an amateur, in his painting *Living Aloft* (Fig 3-23), presented the circumstance in highly idealized artistic forms. He placed the house behind a series of obstacles (water, a wall, trees) and raising it aloft. It conveys this idea of aloof from the troubles of the world in the upper story. (Cahill, 1999)

³ Rocks gathered from the lake of Tai in Zhe Jiang province by their particular forms, were widely used in the Chinese gardens. Especially appreciated by the ancient scholars, the work of the rocks has become a kind of art.



Fig 3-23. Wen Zhengming (文征明). *Living Aloft: Master Liu's retreat* 楼居图轴. 1543. Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper. 95.3 x 45.7 cm. Bequest of Marie-Hélène and Guy Weill, in honor of Wen C. Fong, 2015



Fig 3-24. Wen Zhengming (文征明). *East Garden* 东园图. 1530. Scroll. Ink and color on silk. 30 x 126 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing

A little pavilion in the garden, despite providing a shelter, also serves as a place for contemplation. The site to locate a pavilion is always well chosen, to have a good view of the whole garden or of the far-distant mountains. So that the man inside it could perceive the fullness of the landscape “borrowed” by the pavilion, which is also the man’s way of viewing the world.

The famous orchid pavilion was built for this reason. In this pavilion, the finest scroll of calligraphy was composed by Wang Xizhi in AD 353, recording a literary gathering for a traditional poetry contest. During the contest, many scholars sat along a stream where floating cups of wine following down the water. Whoever encountered the cup stopped in front of him needed to compose a poem, otherwise, to drink up the wine. The orchid pavilion in this garden becomes a place to view the outdoor literary game, furthermore, it symbolizes man’s tiny but essential place in the natural order (Fig 3-25. and Fig 3-26).

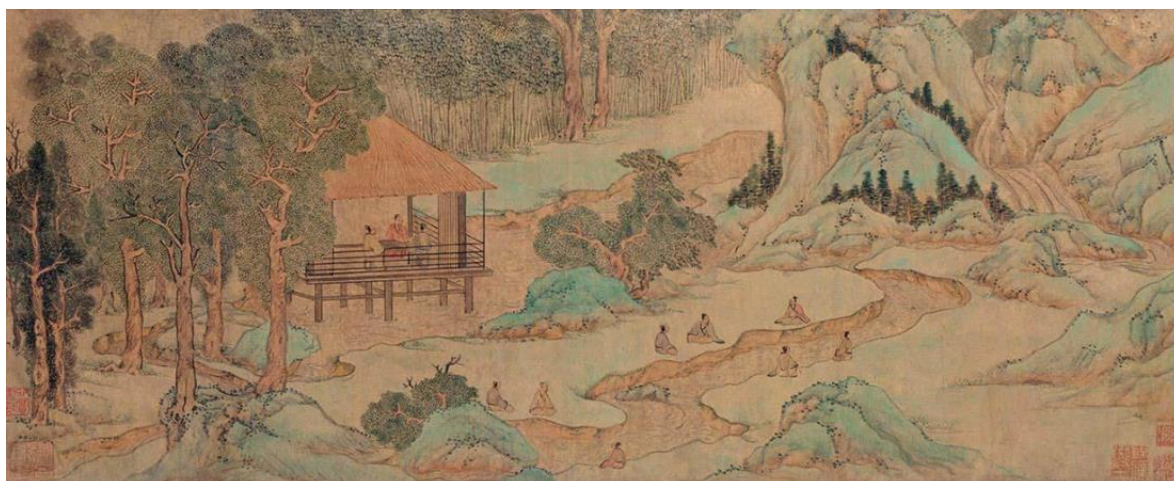


Fig 3-25. Wen Zhengming (文征明). *A Graceful Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* 兰亭修禊图. Ming Dynasty. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 24.2 x 60.1 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing



Fig 3-26. Qian Gu (钱穀). *Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* 兰亭修禊图 (detail). Datable to 1560. Ming dynasty. Handscroll; ink and color on paper. 24.1 x 435.6 cm. C. C. Wang Family, Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1980

Chinese gardens were in many cases the places for social and literary gatherings because the ideal was also to give enjoyment to many people. The literati gathered at one another's homes to converse, to view works of art, to listen to music, to paint, and to compose poetry. To sought refuge from the political world, scholars themselves in spiritual gardens usually became the subject of work.

For example, these two paintings (Fig 3-27, Fig 3-28) depict the theme of enjoying ancient works. Natural settings like ornamental rocks, bamboo, and trees represent the idealized garden for the scholarly gathering. And in both paintings, a man with their attendants are within the enclosure of two large screens. In the painting of Qiu Ying (Fig 3-27), the two screens are located in-between a cultural world with abundant antiques and a natural world of a bamboo court, and a handrail behind the screen indicated the subtle separation. Whereas in the painting of Du Jin (Fig 3-28), the garden is on a zigzag terrace where people are more blended with nature. But both paintings apply the screen to define the human places in the gardens. A screen, as an artifact in nature, does not separate man entirely from the natural realm, while as a painting on the screen, human's cultural attitude to nature is also implied.



Fig 3-27. Qiu Ying (仇英), *Ranking Ancient Works in a Bamboo Court* 博古图, Ming Dynasty (16th century). Album leaf, ink and color on paper, 41.1 x 33.8 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Fig 3-28. Du Jin (杜堇), *Enjoying Antiques* 博古图, 15th -16th century, hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. National Palace. Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.

3.2 Space of Human: Living in City

Dwellings in landscape paintings, whether in a cottage on the mountainside or in a garden pavilion, suggests the harmonious relationship with nature and through that, human's ideal utopia is constructed in paintings. But in cityscape paintings, the spatial language of urban and domestic living is different from the one in the landscape. Still today, people who live in the village are longing for a prosperous city life while those who live in the city, on the contrary, pursue a peaceful and quiet life in the countryside. If landscape painting tells the relation between human and nature, cityscape painting reflects more the social relation between persons.

3.2.1 Buildings and the Articulation of Spaces

Actually, the word “architecture” did not exist in the Chinese language as a tradition. The Chinese concept of it was more similar to the word “building” in English. The difference lies in that Chinese people used to build for practical reasons rather than consider the building as an art form. For example, for a long time in Chinese history, the profession of architect did not exist. There were only craftsmen who constructed hands-on buildings. Following a modular system and using wood as building material, they built the spaces on a human scale. And also due to the pursuit of practical uses, no big distinction was made between civil and religious architecture. One space can be suitable for various functions since even early Chinese Buddhist temples were just better kinds of houses (Fig 3-29).



Fig 3-29. Civil and religious architecture in Chinese Painting. Details from Fig 2-15.

Although Chinese buildings were built for practical reasons, one issue was yet more spiritual and less material – the articulation of spaces. Because as a faithful index of the civilization of the country, architecture was formed due to religious, cultural, and psychologically driven conventions. Generally speaking, it has something to do with the conception of breath (*qi* 气) which is something alive that must flow through all spaces. As seen by cityscape paintings, in most of the cases, buildings or building complexes take up an entire property but enclosing open spaces within themselves. The emphasis on articulation is indicated by the enclosures of the building, on domestic settings, even on whole urban design. Several buildings enclose a courtyard, and several yards group a complex of buildings and yards. Therefore, when we look at a Chinese cityscape, it is more important the unity than the individuality. We should consider the articulation of spaces rather than focus merely on a particular building. The wider definition of architecture emphasizes the void space rather than the mass, and all these spaces in cityscape paintings are closely related to human's activities. In this sense, all objects that articulate spaces as well as enclose human activities can be seen as architecture, whether they are cottages, houses, boats or carriages. In the following parts, we will see how these architectural elements serve as “stages” for public and domestic city lives and how the articulation of spaces is achieved by them.

3.2.2 The Articulation of Public Space

The ancient Chinese city life depends on a fundamental element – the market. The market exchange in China was only permitted in a kind of closed block called *fang* (坊)⁴ until Song dynasty when this limitation was abolished. People began to make business freely on the street and the architectural enclosures were also largely redefined. Most of the commercial activities happened on a street instead of on a square in Chinese public spaces. On a commercial street, the enclosures of commercial buildings are wide open during the day for interchange, and at night they are closed by wood boards for security reasons. Contrarily, private residences are never opened directly to public streets. There is always a yard between the domestic living and public activity. And in cityscape paintings, this “market in the front, residential behind” mode can be seen clearly when both market and residential scenes are juxtaposed in one painting. Moreover, painters are indicating this visual sequence by direct our focus from the streets to the yards behind by setting human figures in the yards. In some cases, a woman half-hidden behind the door makes the scene more attractive, as shown in both pictures of Fig 3-30.

⁴ The cities of the Former Han were divided into blocks (*fang* 坊) by quarters (*li* 里) to strictly regulate city lives. And this regulation was abolished during Song dynasty.



Fig 3-30. The juxtaposition of commercial in front of the street and residential behind it. Details from painting *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, Scroll Seven: Wuxi to Suzhou*. (Sections of Fig 2-15)

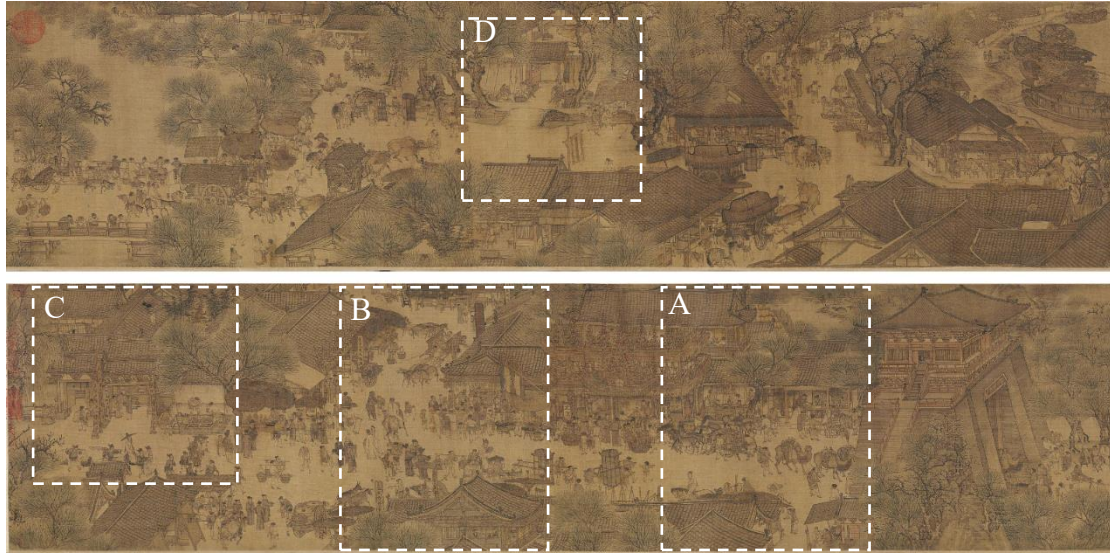


Fig 3-31. Commercial Street in the painting of *Along the River During Qingming Festival*. (Sections of Fig 2-12)

There is also a long and wide commercial street in the painting of *Qingming*, we can see numerous stores, restaurants and commercial kiosks on both sides of the main street (Fig 3-31). If we take a closer look at some commercial scenes, we can find that the artist has made an “urban design” in this painting. For example, in both the street scene A. (besides the city gate, Fig 3-32) and B. (in the corner, Fig 3-33), a window, a gate, a kiosk, or even a sedan car become stages for the people’s activities. Generally, the moving figures on the main street still attract the eyes to go along the street continuously to the next scene. But instead of walking directly ahead, the people on the street are also looking at the stages on both sides of the street, as the arrows show. That enables the eyesight to temporally leave from the main street and go through the spaces on the street sides since the building faces are never totally closed. Though archaeologists have found that the painting of *Qinming* is drawn based on a capital city which really existed in Song dynasty, it is still not evidentially a faithful representation of the buildings and structures of the city. But as shown in the analysis, the experience of the city life is vividly represented. As the commercial model and urban experience, it brings has not changed a lot from the painting period till today, we still feel it real.



Fig 3-32. Street scene A. (Detail of Fig 3-31)



Fig 3-33. Street Scene B. (Detail of Fig 3-31)

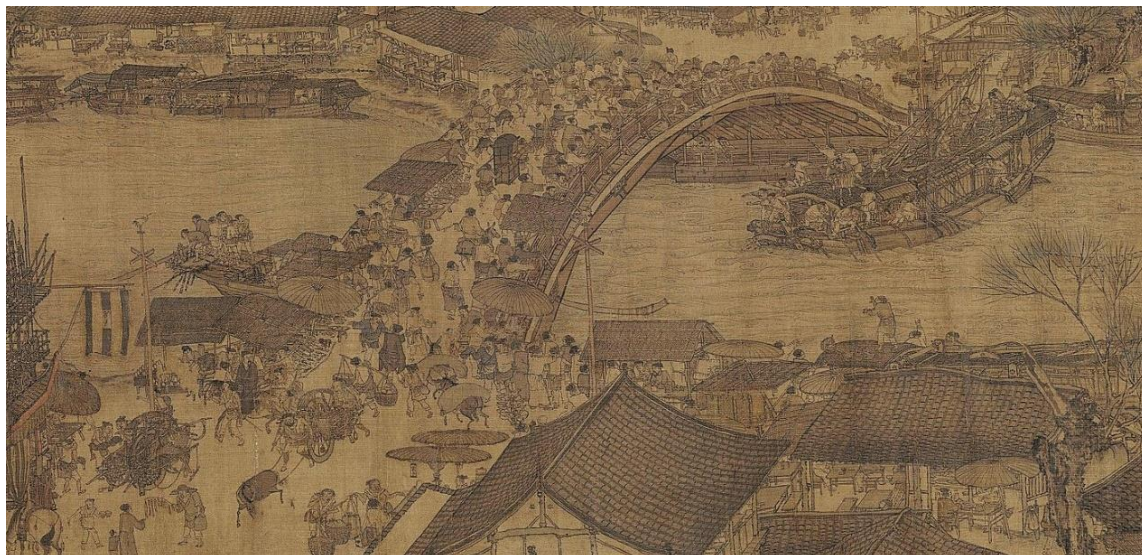


Fig 3-34. Bridge collision in the painting of *Qingming*. (Detail of Fig 2-12)

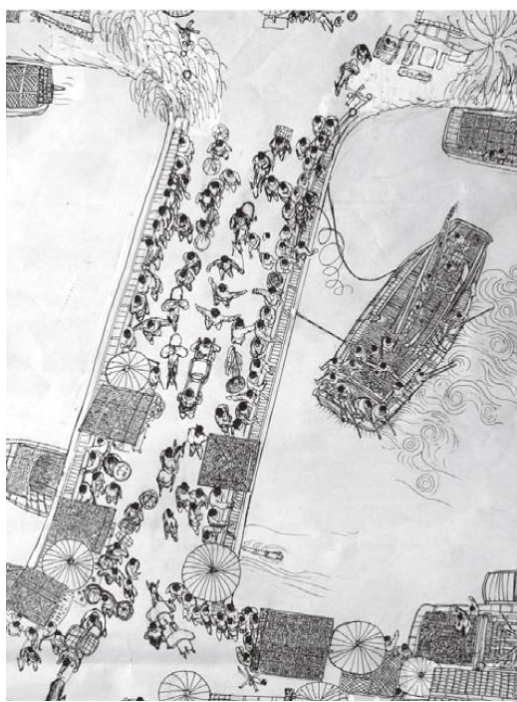


Fig 3-35. Yu Hui. Imagined layout of the collision between the bridge and the boat. (Yu, 2012, p. 131)

Without people, urban spaces would lose an essential depth of meaning, and this is also true in cityscape paintings. Especially in the painting of *Qingming*, human figures and their activities that take up the whole painting make the scroll dramatic. For example, in the brilliant bridge scene, a to-be incident below the central bridge catches the eyes and brings tension to the plot. Because the boat trackers forget to lower down the mast of the boat before passing by the river, everybody is shouting in panic (Fig 3-34). Fortunately, a smart boatman is using a long pole to hold against the bridge to keep the boat from crashing with the bridge rails (Fig 3-35). The distribution of the kiosks and human figures looks quite real directing our viewpoints. We can see that informal kiosks are put randomly along the river, extending onto the bridge. Spatially, the predominating bridge divides the space into a front one and a back one of the river banks. Restaurants and stores on the back of the riverbank are almost empty because most of the people are looking at the collision on the bridge or from the front bank (Fig 3-36).



Fig 3-36. People's activities shown on "stages" in the bridge collision scene, Detail of Fig 3-34

Since all the enclosures, whether of the buildings or of the boats, serve as stages for those vivid activities, the artist prefers to show the daily life instead of the technical accuracy of the buildings' forms. If this painting would be done with perspective, we could miss so many layers of tensions. The so-called Cavalier perspective, on this understanding, is not scientific nor precise but a vehicle that depicted well the rich urban image which is full of uncertainty and variety.

Between Buildings and Yards

In traditional Chinese life as well as in paintings, most of the activities happened in-between spaces of yards and doorways. These spaces are as important or, even more important than those of the interior. This is also reflected in the *Qingming* painting. We can find many activities around the doorway and in the yards. In Fig 3-37, a clinic is set in the doorway beside the street and two women are asking for the doctors. Besides, three men are sitting in front of a wide-open gate, and one passerby is asking for the way to one of them. Behind the gate, we can even see a yard with a chair and some calligraphy works. Similarly, in Fig 3-38, a group of guards is having a rest, and the horse inside the yard is sleeping as well.



Fig 3-37. A yard with a chair and a clinic in the doorway. Scene C (Details from Fig 3-31).



Fig 3-38. A yard with a horse and activities besides the gate. Scene D (Details from Fig 3-31).

In domestic architecture, the orderly succession of rooms and courtyards that makes up a Chinese house have often been seen as an expression of the Chinese ideal of harmonious social relationships. The straight lines and rectangles were reserved for artifacts which concerned man's relationship to man. In each courtyard, the main room always faces south with apartments of lesser importance placed symmetrically on either side. The traditional planning of the courtyards and rooms aimed to regulate the lives of those who lived in them. The Imperial City in Peking, incidentally the largest palace in the world, is in plan an immensely enlarged but still recognizable version of the ordinary Chinese house (Fig 3-39). A whole Chinese city with enclosed walls is another enlargement and even the whole country could be a big yard with the Great Wall surrounded. Yards separate as well as combine the public and private life. It serves for the protection of the inward world as well as keeps some contacts with the outward world (Fig 3-40).

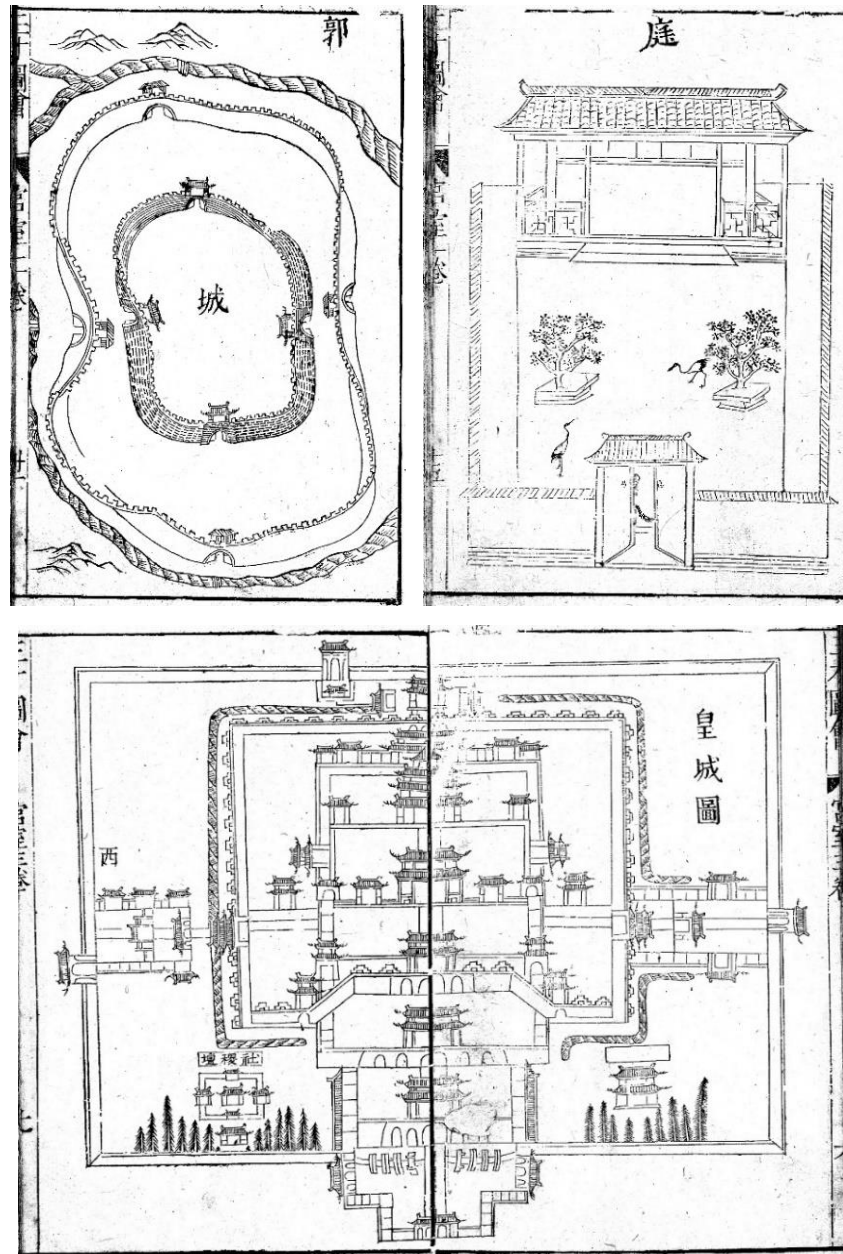


Fig 3-39. A city, a yard house and a palace city. From *San Cai Tu Hui* 三才图会



Fig 3-40. The yard system of emperor's living and nonmonic living. (Section of Fig 2-15)

Yards for narrative illustrations



A. Nazareth, ubi representatur Annuntiatio, postquam Virgo Mater statuit Elizabetham visitare.
B. Ite habet Maria seculum cum Ioseph ad montana Iudee.
C. Domus Zacharie in tribu Iuda in montibus.
D. Ad quam cum pervenisset Maria fecit nuntium ad Elizabeth.
E. Scilicet illi Annus occurrit, sed non tamen prior, filius Mariae.
F. Audiat, Mater Dei salutatione, ecce exultat in vero Elizabeth filius, et repletur Spiritu sancto Mater, et predicat Mariae domum, encomia.
G. Zacharias et Ioseph laudant Deum.
H. Nascitur Iohannes.
I. Post istam ortum, nuntius Nazareth Mariae Virgo Mater cum Ioseph.



Fig 3-41. (Left) Geronimo Nadal. *The Visitation of St. Elizabeth*. 1595 (Scolari, 2012, p. 346)
Fig 3-42. (Right) Giovanni da Rocha. The same scene in Chinese adaption. 1619 (Scolari, 2012, p. 346)

By the end of the sixteenth century, Renaissance perspective had been accepted as a convention in the West. But when Jesuits like Matteo Ricci exported it to China as a vehicle of Christian iconography, they surprisingly found that compared to the Western painting, Chinese paintings do not have depths cues and shades. While on the other side, the Chinese admired too much the technical aspects of perspective to become indifference to its religious significance. For this reason, little by little, some Jesuits gave up the perspectival methods of representation and brought Christian iconography into the scope of the Chinese method of representation. (Scolari, 2012, p. 348). On this sense, around 1620, Jesuit Giovanni da Rocha published the book *Method for Praying the Rosary*⁵ with fourteen wood-block illustrations redrawn in the “Chinese style”. For example, in Fig 3-42, a same religious scene was adapted by Giovanni in the Chinese method to help Chinese people get a better understanding of the story. Though the two pairs of human figures maintain the same postures as in the original image (Fig 3-41), they are dispositioned following different pictorial spaces. In Fig 3-41, since both the interior and exterior spaces are positioned at the same time with the perspectival method, to indicate the narrative sequence, the author had to add instructions with letters below the picture, whereas, in the Chinese version (Fig 3-42), the narration is following the sequence of pictorial space. We firstly leave the horse outside, then enter the courtyard in between, and at last get to the interior space. The gate and the walls work similarly to the letters in the Western version – help to indicate the time of narration. Our imagination is dispositioned while looking at the illustration whereas the tall tree connects again the beginning and the end of the narration.

⁵ Fourteen illustrations from *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (Geronimo Nadal, 1595) were engraved in *Method for Praying the Rosary* (Giovanni da Rocha, 1619), translation in Chinese: 诵念珠规程. The illustrations depict the mysteries of Jesus’ life and employ Chinese artistic conventions by wood-block print coupled with instructions on prayers, meditations, offerings, and requests.



Fig 3-43. Articulation of spaces in Chinese woodblock illustrations

The Chinese adaptations of illustrations told us how important the illustrations are on understanding the meaning, even more than the texts. Furthermore, “changing the way of seeing, and therefore of representing, meant changing the mode of thinking. (Scolari, 2012, p. 348)”. Especially in Ming dynasty, the spatial language used in Chinese woodblock illustrations articulated pictorial spaces in a logic way that makes the images legible as words. Differing from the Western perspective, this spatial language advocates the moving focus in a picture. In the essay *The Spatial Language of the Illustrations in the Novels of Ming Dynasty*, the authors think that the illustrations of Ming novels are diagrams instead of representations and five techniques were listed for the visual compositions of the illustrations. They are juxtaposition, displacement, rotation, dismantling and compression (Jin & Wang, 2016). With any technique, the intention is to keep narrative units intact and let the plots develop freely with the articulation of pictorial spaces. Actually, the in-between spaces like yards enable the narrative connections on a fictitious dimension as well as on the real dimension. It is the same conception of “flowing-breath” and “going-through” spaces defined by semi-closed enclosures (walls, gates, windows etc.) and connections (yards, corridors etc.). From the illustrations taken from various Chinese ancient novels, we can see it clearly (Fig 3-43- Fig 3-46)



Fig 3-44. Articulation of wall-yard spaces in Chinese woodblock illustrations

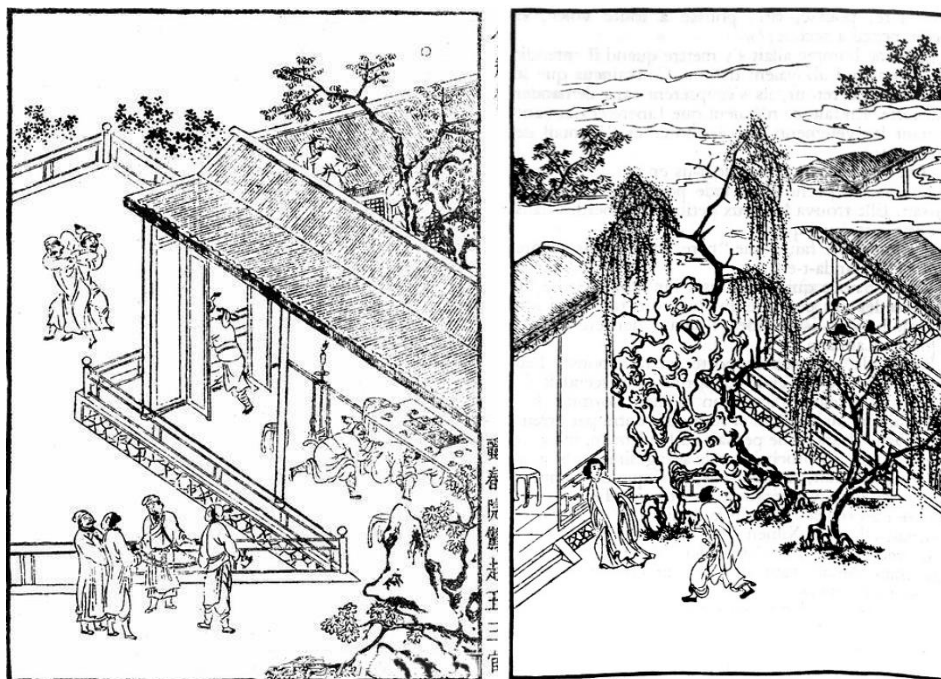


Fig 3-45. Articulation of corridor-house spaces in Chinese woodblock illustrations

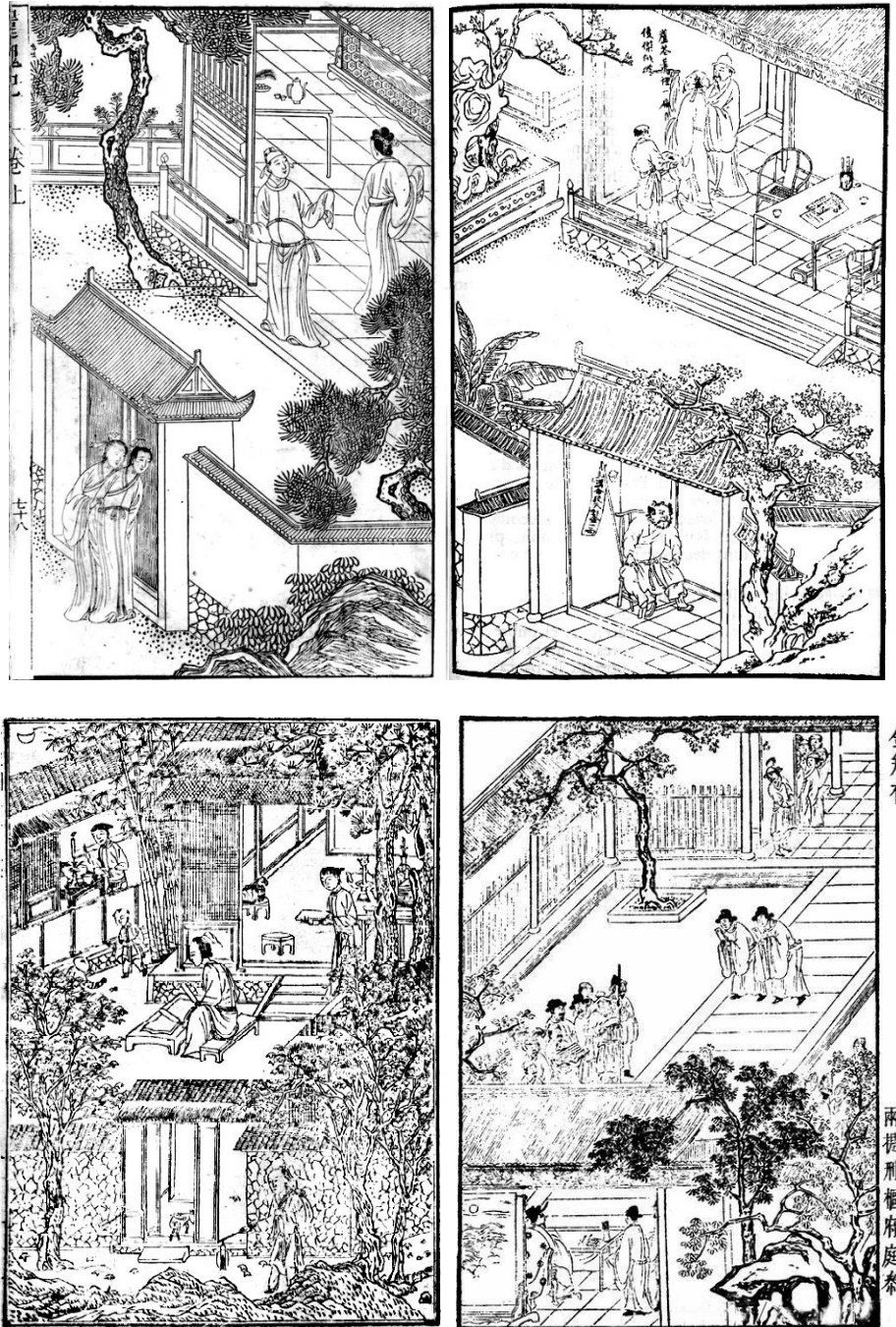


Fig 3-46. Articulation of gate-yard-house spaces in Chinese woodblock illustrations⁶

⁶ Woodblock illustrations organized by the author. Fig 3-43 to Fig 3-46 Cited from various editions of well-known Chinese Novels like *The Golden Lotus* 金瓶梅, *Water Margin* 水浒传, *Peony Pavilion* 牡丹亭 etc.

3.2.3 The Articulation of Domestic Spaces

If we turn to a domestic view, the enclosures of spaces become essentially important for the articulation of space as well. In the scroll painting *Spring Morning in the Han Palace*, only half of the imagery building is illustrated, the roofs are hidden because the artist wants to emphasize the below-half of the buildings where interactions happen between them and the yards (Fig 3-47). From the right to the left, a series of leisure activities associated with literati are depicted in sequence. Following horizontally the narrative sequence, if we pay attention to the enclosures, we can find that most of the human figures besides these places seem to “escape” from limitations, whether they be a handrail, a window, a gate, or a wall (Fig 3-48).



Fig 3-47. Qiu Ying (仇英, ca. 1494-1552). *Spring Morning in the Han Palace* 汉宫春晓图, Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 30.6 x 574.1 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei



Fig 3-48. Human figures between semi-open enclosures. Details of Fig 3-47



Fig 3-49. Layers of spaces from “frontal stages”. Details of Fig 3-47.

Meanwhile, the frontal faces framed by columns, windows, and screens, here again, are working similarly to stages that present various performances whilst indicating the continuity of spaces from the surface of the painting to its distant background. This phenomenon in Chinese painting is deeply reflected by the art historian Wu Hung by comparing two paintings with screens (Fig 3-50. and Fig 3-51).



Fig 3-50. Gu Hongzhong (顾闳中, ca.910-980). *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* 韩熙载夜宴图, Five Dynasties period (907-960). Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 28.7 x 335.5 cm, the Palace Museum, Beijing

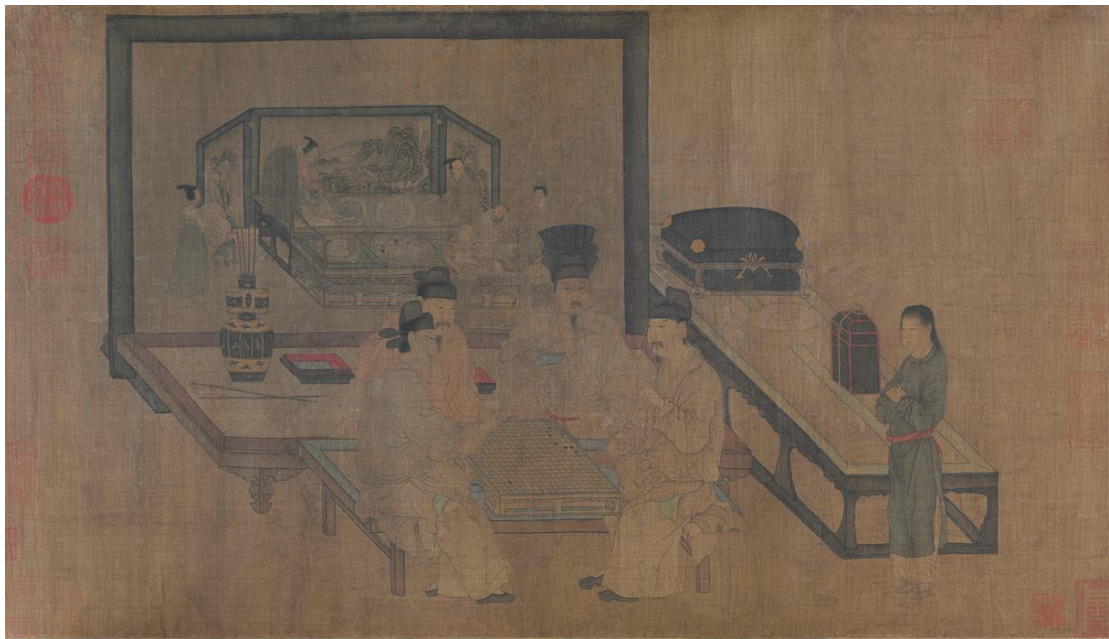


Fig 3-51. Zhou Wenju (周文矩 10th c.), *Playing Go under Double Screens* 重屏会棋图, Five Dynasties Period. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 40.3 x 70.5 cm, the Palace Museum, Beijing

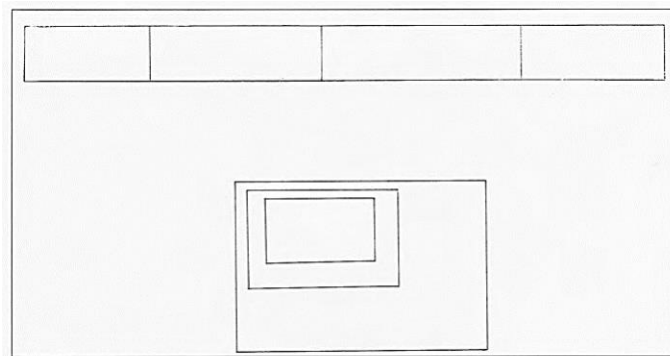


Fig 3-52. Wu Hung. Showing sub-frames in Fig 3-50. and Fig 3-51 (Wu, 1996, p. 128)



Fig 3-53. The beginning section of Gu's painting (Fig 3-50)



Fig 3-54. Detail of Zhou's painting (Fig 3-51)

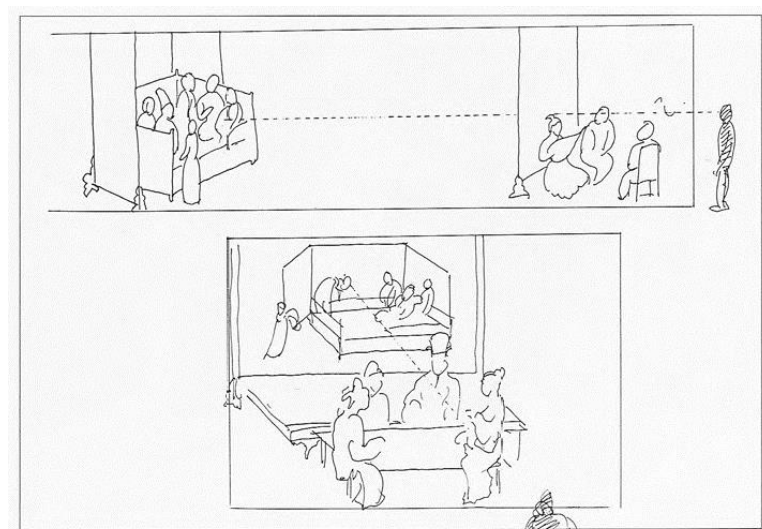


Fig 3-55. Wu Hung. Showing the interchangeability of Fig 3-53. and Fig 3-54 (Wu, 1996, p. 128)

Wu (1996) argued that the subject-matter of both paintings are similar and the difference mainly lies in the way of representation. That Gu's interlocking frames appear as superimposed frames in Zhou's work, as seen in Wu's analysis (Fig 3-52). By comparing a section of both painting, Wu Hung said:

"The male gathering at the beginning of Gu's *Night Entertainment*, for example, is removed to the foreground in a single-framed picture, against a 'transparent' screen that allows the viewer to see the 'bedroom' scene painted in the second section of the handscroll... While Gu separates the spectator from the scenes to be viewed, Zhou invites his participation."

The two ways of painting actually involved with two different ways of watching (Fig 3-55). In the "painting within a painting" like Fig 3-51, the illusion of spatial depth is successfully achieved, but the illusionary space also becomes intangible. Contrarily, in a "scroll painting", when screens are placed perpendicularly to the painting's plane surface like Fig 3-50, the articulation of the spaces becomes visible and touchable.

In Gu's scroll *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai*, three screens separate as well as connect four units of scenes in a diachronic reading sequence (Fig 3-56). They define the pictorial unites by putting an end to the previous section and initiating the following one. The scroll depicted a home party of the 10th-century official Han Xizai⁷. The role of the host Han appeared five times in the same painting, changing his positions and costumes in a sequence. In the first scene, Han is sitting on a couch, well dressed in a black cap, enjoying the pipa-guitar performance with many guests around him (episode 1); separated by a large screen, we entry the second scene, where Han was playing the drum for a dancing girl. Smoothly connected by two female figures in the middle, a bedroom scene appeared within another screen (episode 2); the informality is further developed when Han sits on a chair, with his garment unbuttoned, cooling himself while enjoying another performance (episode 3); in the last scene, Han, in a yellow robe, was making a suggestion to the guests who are physically engaged with the girls in intimacy contacts (episode 4). From the first section to the last one, the furnishing has been gradually reduced while the intimacy between figures has been intensified.

But curiously, the four scenes become a logical narration only when we view the scroll in an unfurling way because, otherwise, in an overall view, the character Han would appear at either side of a screen, which is a situation which never occurs in real life. Furthermore, if we pay attention to the figures besides the screens, we will find a maid who peeps at the party from behind a screen and a man and a woman talking to each other across a screen

⁷ The motivation of the painting: Court painter Gu Hongzhong was sent by Southern Tang emperor Li Yu as a detective to Han Xizai's night entertainment because the emperor did not trust Han Xizai for political reasons or because he wanted to see Han's indulgence-famed party without going there by himself. The artist recreated this painting based on his memory of the party and presented it to the throne.

(Fig 3-57). These figures appeared to link the isolated scenes into a continuous pictorial plane, and also encourage the viewer to keep unrolling the painting (Wu, 1996, p. 68).

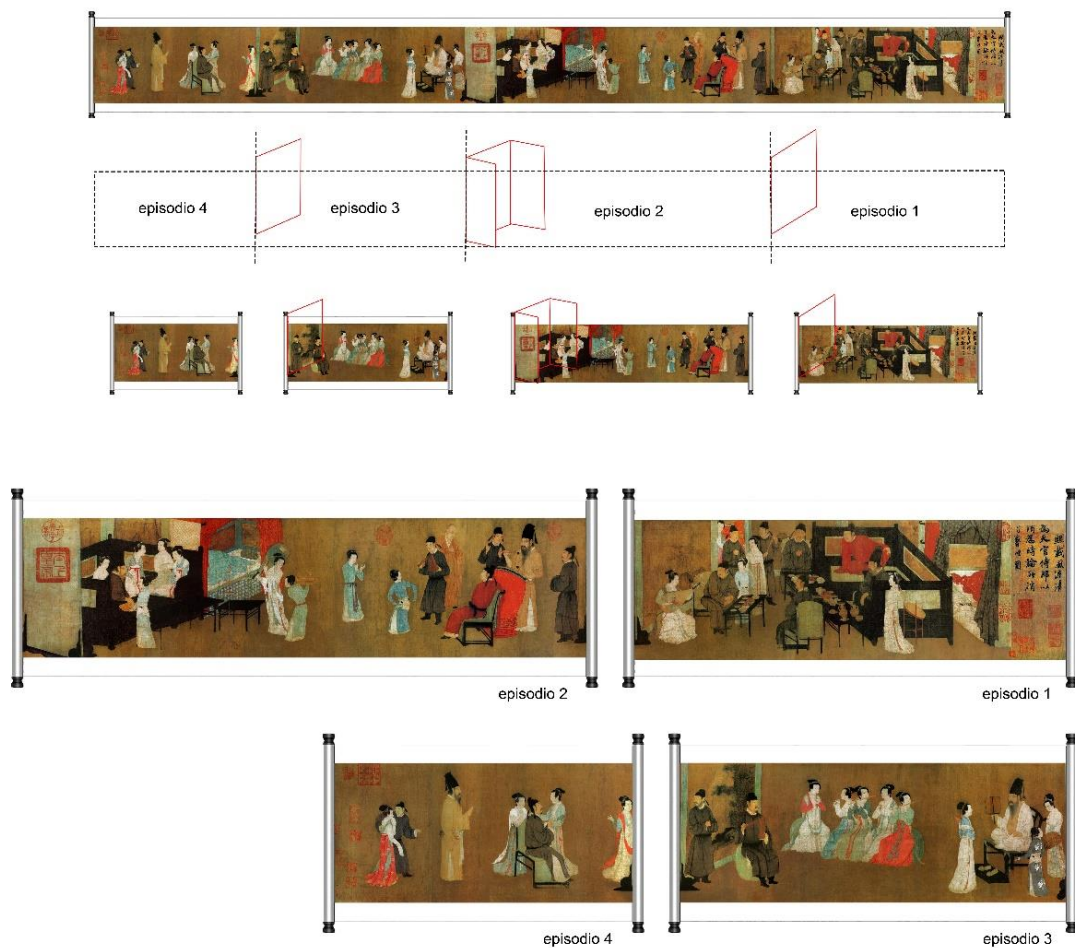


Fig 3-56. Screens employed in the painting *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (Fig 3-50) divide as well as connect pictorial spaces



Fig 3-57. A maid who peeps at the party from behind a screen (from episode 1) and a man and a woman talking to each other across a screen (between episode 3 and 4). Details from Fig 3-56

In the Chinese culture, the screen serves as an architectonic form which maintains privacy in a bedroom, sets off the reception quarter in a house and surrounds the throne in the palace. The practical significance of the screen indicates its three-dimensional meaning – to define a real space as a piece of furniture. “The screen transforms *space* into *places* that are definable, manageable, and obtainable. (Wu, 1996, p. 11)” Screen divides spaces into a front one and a back one, but different from walls, it does not separate spaces completely. The screen presents us something as well as hides something, and this in-betweenness adds a mysterious dimension to it. Therefore, the screen is also placed in novel illustrations for narration (Fig 3-58).

But on the other hand, a screen can also be a two-dimensional pictorial representation. In this case, it becomes a picture plane that conveys the symbolic meaning instead of the practical one. In some literati paintings to indicate reclusion, we can see how a screen is utilized as a medium to borrow nature for a domestic living (Fig 3-59). Like a landscape painting of seclusion, nature on a screen conveys the artist’s wish to live with nature, whereas instead of seating inside a cottage, the hermit of this painting is lying down on a couch in front of a screen painting. Although depicting the same wish as a landscape painting of seclusion, the scale is different and due to which the spectator can feel more closely embodied in the painting – we can even sense the coolness from the tree shades in a hot summer.

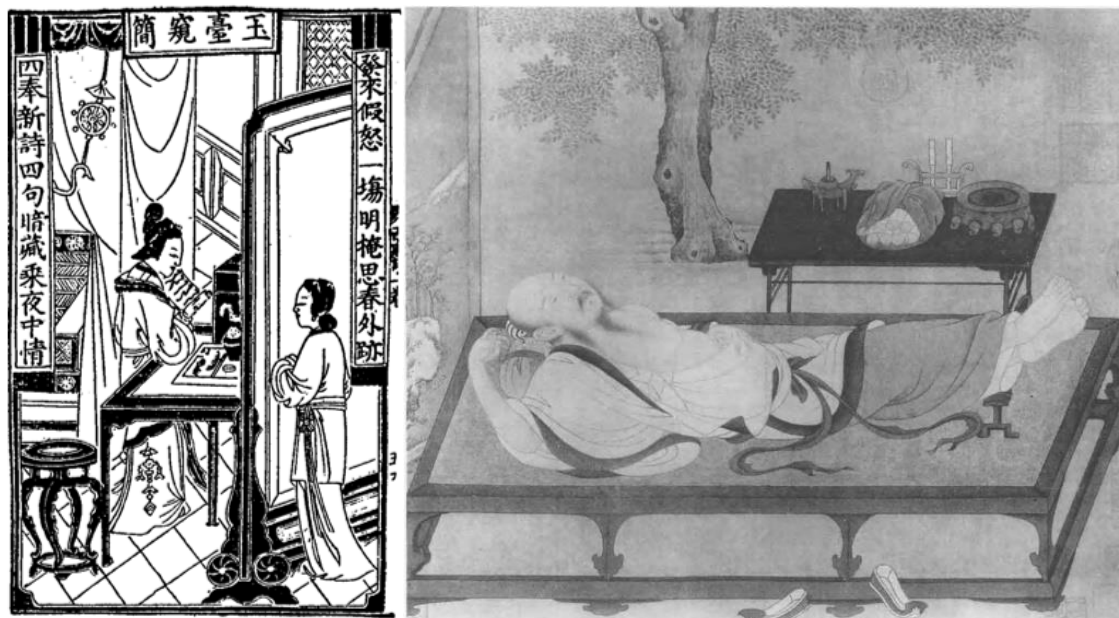


Fig 3-58. (Left) Illustration of *The Romance of the West Chamber* 西厢记. Ming dynasty, Wanli (万历) edition.

Fig 3-59. (Right) *Passing a Summer in the Shade of a Locust Tree* 槐荫消夏图. Early Ming, album leaf, ink and color on silk. Palace Museum, Beijing.

“It is difficult to find another object from ancient Chinese culture whose significance, practical or symbolic, is so entirely bound up with the notion of space. (Wu, 1996)” The tension brought between two-dimension and three-dimension space is the key to understand screen paintings as well as architecture. When gazed frontally, a screen or a gate is an image-bearing indicator whereas in a general glance, it becomes a practical object that composes the narration of a painting. In many scroll paintings and novel illustrations, the placement of architectural elements in both ways is indicated in the narrative of durational spaces (Fig 3-60 and Fig 3-61).



Fig 3-60. A scholar is painting on a screen which is placed in-between interior and exterior.
Woodblock print. (Lai, 1976, p. 50)



Fig 3-61. Liu Songnian(刘松年). *The painting of eighteen scholars* 十八学士图. Song dynasty.
National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Like stages (Fig 3-62), screens and pavilions in the paintings defined places and attract our eyes to those places. Curiously, in a domestic space, when the screen is combined with furniture, not merely our eyes, our whole body will be involved with the painting. In such a human scale and with the half-open “gate”, the painting seems to welcome us to go inside the scenes (Fig 3-63 - Fig 3-65).



Fig 3-62. *Watching plays in a Tea Garden* 清光绪年间茶园演剧图. Qing dynasty. Capital Museum, Beijing.



Fig 3-63. Screen-furniture in *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (Fig 3-50)

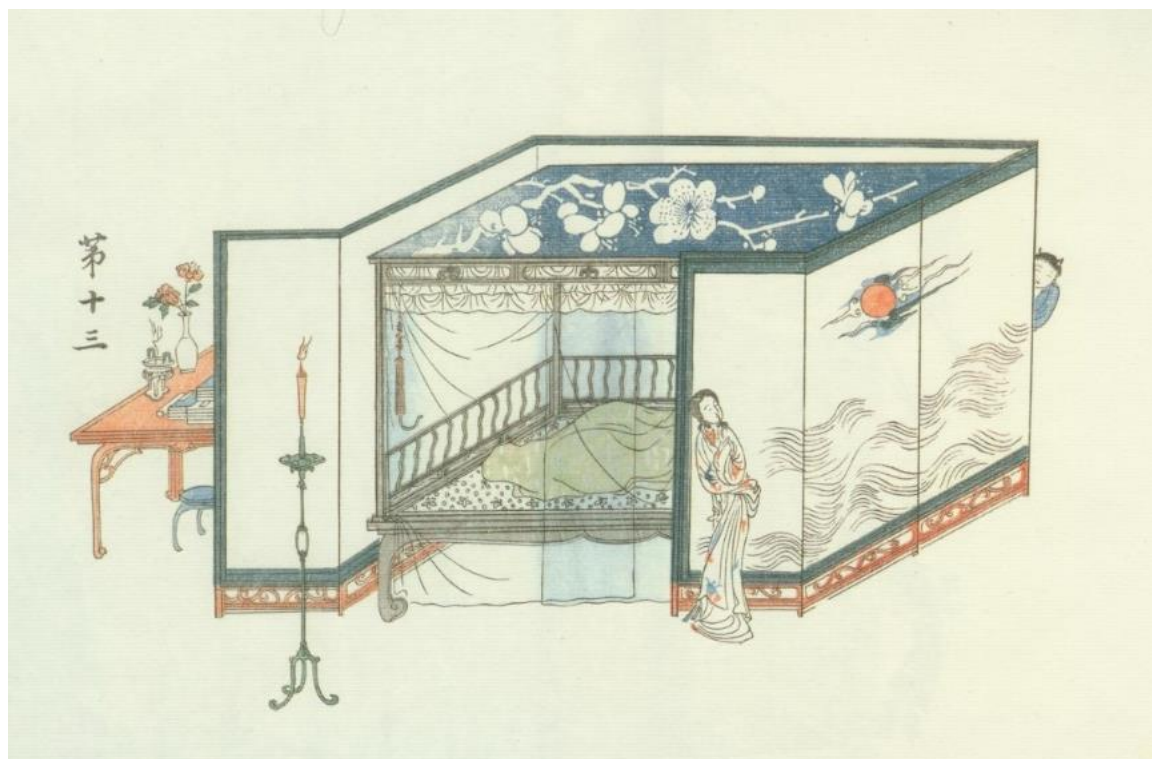


Fig 3-64. Illustration of The Romance of the West Chamber 西厢记. Minqiji (闵齐伋) edition.



Fig 3-65. Attributed to Gu Kaizhi (顾恺之, ca.345-406). *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* 女史箴图 (detail), Jin Dynasty (265-420), The British Museum, London

Conclusion

In their choices of human habitations, the Chinese usually tried to intimate man's experience of nature rather than his domination of it. Especially when related to the surrounding natural settings, temples, pavilions, and cottages are key indicators for us to understand landscape paintings. The macrocosmic view of man's minuteness in relation to nature is not only pictorially represented, but also philosophically reflected. Equally, the landscape painting was developed during China's political upheaval, when poets and artists turned away to seek their spiritual enlightenment. As a result, numerous paintings about seclusion theme were produced. Conventionally the composition is compartmentalized with a reclusive dwelling in the closed-in part, and a distant mountain in the opening-out part which signifies the access to an ideal world. Landscape paintings were no longer about the descriptions of the visible mountains, but gradually became means of conveying the literati artists' inner concerns of the country and themselves. Chinese gardens thus logically became the three-dimensional landscape paintings for the same ideology. The pavilions in garden and gardening paintings, similar to the hermitages in landscape paintings, were ideal places for scholars to devote themselves to self-cultivation and contemplation.

Comparing to landscape paintings that tell the relation between man and nature, cityscape paintings rather reflect the relation between man and man. The traditional Chinese architecture emphasizes the articulation of spaces instead of the mass of a single building because the void between exterior and interior is where human's interaction with each other happens. In paintings of the public life, commercial streets are depicted with semi-open stores and kiosks; yards are always set between the public and private places. In paintings of the domestic life, similarly, gates, windows, columns, and screens define places as well as let breathing air flow through spaces. The enclosures in cityscape paintings are always not totally closed because, in the narrative scrolls, they rather serve as compositional devices of compartmentalization than as form-like representations of the real buildings. In this sense, whether in landscape or cityscape paintings, habitations are stages to present man's life in the relation between human and nature or between human and the city. It is an inclusive embodiment showing things constituting a unity and in a poetic relationship between them, but never individually alone.

Chapter 4

Visual Culture and Conventional Schemas of Chinese Painting

Through chapter 2 and 3, the “wandering” and “living” experiences were discussed in terms of both landscape and cityscape paintings. These two notions of pictorial experience aroused by Guo Xi are also terms we commonly use to describe architecture. Then, is the perception of painting related to the perception of architecture? If so, what is the relationship and how is it achieved? To answer these questions, firstly, it is important to understand the perception mechanisms to paint and to watch a painting in a psychologic domain.

4.1 Visual Perception and Visual Thinking of Representations

4.1.1 Visual Perception: Sense and Representation of Space

When we try to represent a physical space on a plane surface, a big contradiction appears. How to turn three-dimensional objects to two-dimensional mediums? This process is concerned with how we perceive the physical spaces and in which method we transform our spatial sensations into drawings. A representation is the result of this process. Since viewers perceive paintings to form their own spatial pattern in mind, a representation can establish the relationship between a viewer and a painter by intervening spatial perceptions.

Psychologist Rudolf Arnheim (1974, p.169) argues that the formation of representational concepts distinguishes the artist from the non-artist. It means we experience the world and life around us in the same way, but the artist is deeply concerned with- and impressed by- his experience, and he/she can capture the meaning of the experience in a particular medium, and thus makes it tangible. In turn, as viewers, we need to understand how artists capture the sense of space and in which medium and formation of concepts, the perception is represented. In this way, we are perceiving a painting in the view of the artist and the significance of the painting can be understood by us.

Our visual experience of space relies upon a hierarchy of optical functions. The primary visual signals or cues which aid our perception of depth are a binocular vision and motion parallax. Visual techniques such as overlapping, foreshortening, distortion, and chiaroscuro are normally used to composite forms in pictorial space. However, there is actually no such space or volume on the retinas of the eyes, what we see are just visual sensations like light, color, and form. The visual techniques are vehicles that help us to reflect our sensations to planes, but the vehicles also limit our imaginations when we believe that what we represent is the only way and the predominant way in the world. In the book *A Further Study of Visual Perception* (Vernon, 1954), professor of psychology Vernon, M.D. categorized four levels for the perception of objects: perception of real objects, the perception of representation of real objects, the perception of abstract shapes and patterns and perception of symbolic material. The perception is more than to detect the form of an object, it is also concerned with culture and worldview, with painter's and viewer's mental world.

4.1.2 Visual Thinking: Cultural Schemas

“The drawing has got to be done blind, with my whole heart.”

-Henri Matisse

In the book *Art and Illusion: A Study In The Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, art historian E. H. Gombrich introduced the ideas of “schemata”, “making and matching”, “correction” and “trial and error” in the psychology of perception in art. He claimed that art originates in people’s reactions to the physical world rather than in the visible world itself, so it is an issue of psychology. Artists in history follow the formula of “making comes before matching” and “schema and correction”. That means when an artist is scanning the physical world, he will be attracted by motifs which can be matched successfully with the schemata he/she has learned to handle. The artist will see what he paints by comparing what he has drawn with what he is trying to draw and make corrections on it following the schemata set by force of convention and the actual style. Then “all art originates in the human mind, in our reactions to the world rather than in the visible world itself, and it is precisely because all art is ‘conceptual’ that all representations are recognizable by their style” (Gombrich, 2000, p. 87). When we see a painting, we should treat it as a result of conceptual thinking, and understand what is seen in particular cultural contexts and conventions.

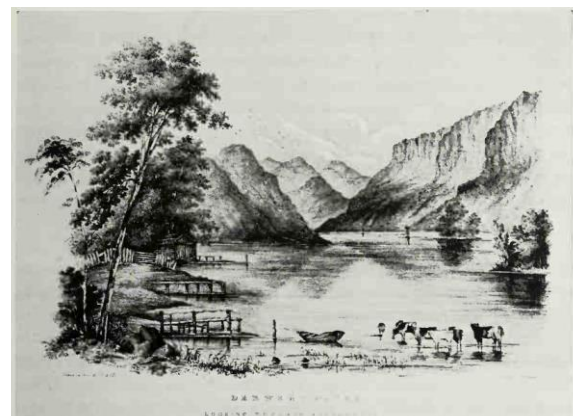
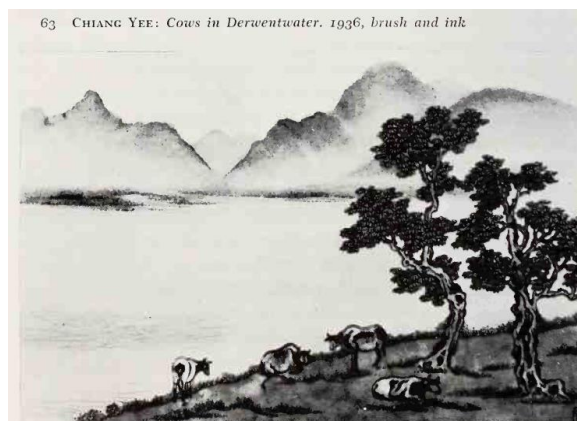


Fig 4-1. (Left) Chang Yee. *Cows in Derwentwater*. 1936, brush and ink. (Gombrich, 2000, p. 84)

Fig 4-2. (Right) Anonymous. *Derwentwater, looking toward Borrowdale*. 1826, lithograph (Gombrich, 2000, p. 84)

By comparing these two pictures from the same view of Derwentwater of English Lakeland, Gombrich concluded his well-known saying: "Painting is an activity, and the artist will, therefore, tend to see what he paints rather than to paint what he sees. (Gombrich, 2000, p. 86)" On Mr. Chiang Yee's painting (Fig 4-1), the artist adapted Chinese idiom to the English scene comparing to the typical picturesque rendering from the Romantic period (Fig 4-2). In the painting "through Chinese eyes", the mountains are set as layers of fading planes rather than as volumes of chiaroscuro change in the "Western eyes".

When applied to representational art, perspective predominately becomes a purposive pattern. Scholar Shlain (1991, pp. 152-168) argued that "whether the world is actually in perspective or whether we learn to see it in this particular way remains a lively debate in art and psychology circles ". Actually, not everyone can "see" perspective because it is a belief in Euclidean space. People used to believe that the illusion they saw is the whole truth. However, we can find a various version of beliefs in a variety of civilizations. Pablo Picasso went to an exhibition of African tribal artifacts in Paris in 1907. The African primitive art affected him so much that he "literally began to shake as if he had a fever". That made him bring forth Cubism, "the most radical new art movement since Giotto's revolution over five hundred years earlier". And "eventually, Manet, Monet, Degas, Gauguin, and van Gogh all would acknowledge their debt to Asian influence". (Shlain, 1991) Though the conception of western contemporary art movements seems similar to the Chinese art, Rowley (1974) claimed that "Chinese intuition is far removed from contemporary subjectivism; the abstract quality of Chinese design arose from simplification and elimination rather than from mechanization or distortion of forms...If we look at Chinese painting through "modern" eyes we will miss its meaning." Although the Chinese visual culture lacks the base of geometrical and mathematical thinking of perspective, there is a specific pattern. In the Chinese culture, the perceiving of space, rather than knowledge, is the result of a mental process which intertwines the ability of poetic thinking. Gombrich (2000, p.150) claims that the Chinese method for visual representation may focus not primarily on the perception of images nor the plausible narrative, but on something that can be described as "poetic evocation".

4.2 The Attitude to Watch and to Paint Chinese Painting

4.2.1 To Paint like Composing a Poem

“World” does not refer only to scenes and objects; joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness are also a world within the human heart. Thus, those poems that can describe true scenes and objects and true emotions and feelings are said to have a world; otherwise, they are said to lack a world.

-Wang Guowei(1877-1927)

Renjian Cihua, sec.1

The Song poet-painter Su Shi(1037-1101) once praised the Tang poet-painter Wang Wei, saying, “there is poetry in his painting and painting in his poetry”. Both painting and poetry use the imagery of their feelings and emotions to move people. Poems are usually attached with Chinese landscape paintings, not only as to supply the basic information like notes, but also to enrich the meaning of the painting and clarify the painter’s ideas. While reading the poems, we can see the paintings in our mind’s eye. Painting and poetry are interdependent. When a painter paints, he also preludes to a pattern set by the poem, using the similar kind of evocative juxtapositions, rather than depicting real landscape’s beauty, as Su Shi said: “anyone who judges a painting by form-likeness shows the insight of a child”. The objective matters with the likeness of the form are relegated a substantial lower status because painting that signifies symbolic significances go beyond the mimetic representation. When we treat painting as a language, if picture-like is a prosaic depicting, picture-idea is poetry.

Guo Xi also quotes “poetry is painting without form, painting is poetry with form ¹” in *The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams* (Guo, 1960). His painting *Old Tree, Level Distance* (Fig 2-8) depicted an autumn scene with the poem about a retired scholar returning home at the end of a long and successful political career. In this painting, a fisherman who is setting off for the journey, suggests that this retired man is going to live closer to nature. The atmosphere of autumn and aged trees are also reflecting the advanced age of the man. Through this painting, we come to understand that Guo Xi is not merely representing nature.

1 诗是无形画，画是有形诗

By taking qualities associated with calligraphy and poetry, he is using the landscape painting to convey the same kind of poetic meaning. (Fong, 1992)

From the Song to the Yuan dynasty, the relationship between poetry and painting took on new forms in China when literati painting became the dominant tradition. Artists concentrated on perfecting their ink and brush technique to express their moral self-cultivation and personal emotions. In fact, after Song dynasty, a landscape painting was often not considered complete unless a poem by the artist was inscribed on it. A painting of a scene, when perfected, should evoke in the viewer's thought and feeling, akin to that the actual scene would do. The word *yijing* (意境) was used on this occasion. It is an aim to reach the underlying realities of the material world, attainable through languages as well as through visual arts.

At the end of the twelfth century, blankness usually takes up most of the pictorial spaces. However, the elimination of the unessential is not austerity but poetry, because the picture becomes the distillation of mood. In Ma Yuan's painting (Fig 4-3), for example, a lofty scholar stopped on his way to ponder the beauty of Nature. His view extending into the misty distance of the great void. The gaze of the viewer is inevitably drawn from a material world to an ideal one by the evocative power of the emptiness. What is undrawn in the painting is what is unsaid by a poem



Fig 4-3. Ma Yuan(马远, c.1160-1225). *A Mountain Path in Spring* 山径春行图. Song Dynasty (960-1279). Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 27.4 x 43.1 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei

4.2.2 To Read the Language of Paintings

The Chinese written language, with its pictographic elements, constitutes the basis of calligraphy, traditionally the most highly regarded of the visual arts. The single brushstroke is the origin of all existence, the root of the myriad phenomena. A Chinese painter's training, in fact, traditionally began with writing. "Learning painting is no different from learning calligraphy"-said by Guo Xi. Both calligraphy and painting emphasize brushwork, and by practicing calligraphy a painter strengthened hand-eye coordination and gained a sense of arrangement and proportion. "The key to Chinese painting is its calligraphic brushwork. Known as the 'trace' of the brush and ink, the subject of a calligraphic work is the brush as an extension of the calligrapher's own body. Similarly, a Chinese painting projects a painter's physical movements...By never aspiring to realism alone, the Chinese artist was free to use the signs of both writing and painting to produce a poem-painting, a work that is read and recited as well as viewed." (Fong, 1992, p. 5)



Fig 4-4. A Chinese old man practicing calligraphy in a park



Fig 4-5. Abstract Expressionism artist Jackson Pollock's action painting of *Number 32*



In *Ways of Seeing* (Berger, 1972), John Berger argues that when we see, we are not just looking—we are reading the language of images. He took a painting by Surrealist painter Magritte as an example, to explain “the always-present gap between words and seeing”. Whilst in China, the intercommunities among poetry, calligraphy, and painting were felt to be so strong that the three arts became known as the three perfections. Language and painting were regarded as having similar representative powers.

Fig 4- 6. Rene Magritte. *They Key to Dreams*. 1930. Private collection

In the language of paintings, the conventional elements become an established pattern like the semiotics of language. James Cahill adopts this method to read the meaning of Chinese paintings: “Semiotics assumes a system of signification, a kind of code, which people of the artist’s time understood without thinking about it or having to explain it to each other. The code will not be found written out then in texts of the time but must be unlocked, recovered from the works themselves with the help of whatever clues are provided by inscriptions and other texts. (Cahill, 1999, p. 41)” Certain motifs and features of painting’s composition become signs that carry meaning.

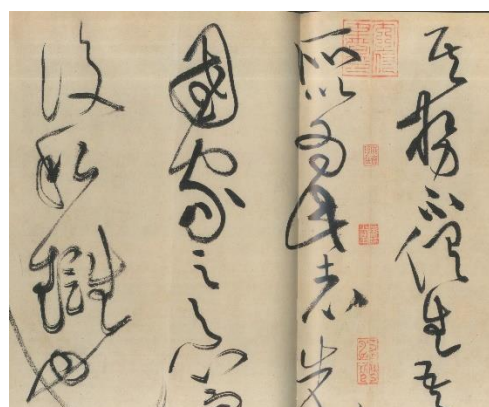


Fig 4-7. (Left) Zhao Mengfu (赵孟頫 1254-1322). *Twin Pines, Level Distance* (Detail). Yuan dynasty. Dated ca.1310. Metropolitan Museum.

Fig 4-8. (Right) Huang Tingjian (黄庭坚, 1045-1105). *Biographies of Lian Po and Lin Xiangru* 廉颇蔺相如列传, ca. 1095. Details. Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (Fong, 1992, p. 169)

In the painting *Twin Pines, Level Distance* (Fig 4-7), the painter used the landscape as a vehicle but the way in which he draws them result in pure calligraphy look. He “writes” out the landscape by using the verb to describe what he is feeling and the brushwork becomes his handwriting that signifies the mood of the artist.

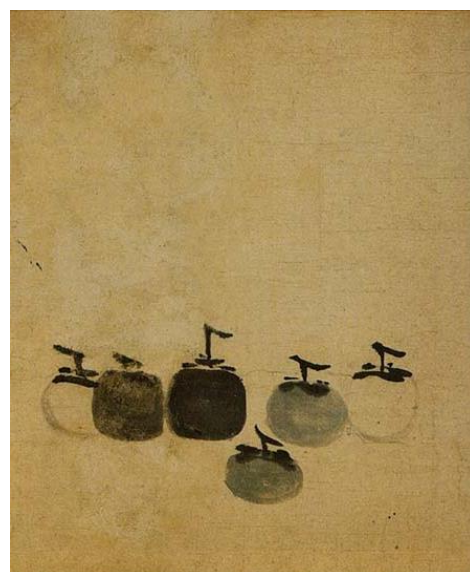


Fig 4-9. (Left) The calligraphy works of the character 不 (*bu*) from various artists.

Fig 4-10. (Right) Mu Xi (牧溪, 1220s-1280s). *Six Persimmons* 六柿图. Ink on paper. Daitoku-ji, Kyoto.

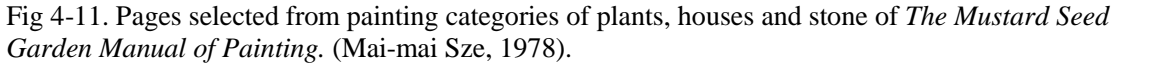
A Chinese saying goes: “The calligraphic style is the man.” The character of lines and forms produced by the brush reveals the personality of who draws them and his mood at the moment he drew them - both by the brush of a calligraphy and that of a painting. Each particular artist has his own typography of writing as well as of painting (Fig 4-9). In Mu Xi’s painting, except for the Zen Spirit it pursues, the six persimmons look like the same Chinese character in six typefaces. And the significance of the painting can only be understood if we are able to read the language of the artist. The three perfections, calligraphy, poetry and painting in Chinese art are together treated as vehicles for embodying one’s feelings and to convey one’s very nature.

Like the calligraphy script, the conventional language of landscape painting was becoming so essential that in 1679, logically a painting guidebook was published. “It is one thing, however, to look at pleasant pictures painted by other people and entirely another matter to paint such pictures. Appreciating the works of others, one is essentially a spectator receiving impressions; whereas in painting pictures, the conception originates and rises from the

deepest recesses of the heart.” Li Yu² said this at the beginning of his preface for the book *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*. (Mai-mai Sze, 1978) This book was published in 1679 not only as a manual to teach people how to draw but also a guide on how to appreciate landscape paintings. Due to the illness, Li Yu could not travel during a period. Fortunately, he could still be “wandering while at rest” by unrolling whole landscape on the table before him even while eating or sleeping. Thus, he has written down on one of the scrolls: “Many walled cities under my roof and many landscapes before my eyes.” It contains the same significance as a Chinese saying “may ten thousand miles be illustrated in a foot”. One may wander in a landscape while actually at rest and never have to go any distance. Similar to a read literary work, this is achieved by a journey with the imagination since only the mind can perceive underlying principles.

Actually, before Chinese artists begin to paint, they already know what to paint by heart as well. Their pre-experience is based on the observation of the world through the principles of nature. Artists may travel several times to different mountains before they begin to paint, but they will not represent form-like mountains. The experience is gained with their perceptions of “thousands of mountains” rather than as a result of observing and mimicking one specific mountain. Imitating ancient masterpieces was quite common in Chinese art history. In the tradition, young artists should always start their career by the modeling of ancient works, because they believe that there are visual codes in the former masterpieces. When Chinese artists create their own pieces, they prefer to start their work in studios instead of in real nature. Artists go to travel to train their mind, and they go to imitate great paintings to establish the pre-experienced pattern by heart. Their creating way coincides with the theories of “make before matching” and “schemata and correction” by Gombrich. Only when the painters are totally prepared with their whole mind, they will begin to draw.

² Aimed at producing a manual of landscape painting, famous playwright Li Yu published the book *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* in 1679. Mustard Seed Garden is the name of a mansion own by Li Yu in Zhejiang province.



As a distillation of years of looking at nature, master artists formed some languages of pictorial conventions. As a “grammar” of it, the book *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* comprises five fascicles (Fig 4-11). The first fascicle deals with the general principles of landscape painting, the second the painting of trees, the third that of hills and stones, the fourth that of people and houses, and the fifth comprises the selected works of great landscape painters.

Human figures are also keys to understand landscape paintings. The painted person has to interact with the landscape to a result that the people and the mountain seem to be looking at each other³. And as shown in the picked picture of *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (Fig 4-12), these people are not common people but immortal-like while they are looking up to clouds, looking down to the stream, composing poems, or drinking wine face to face with the bloom of flowers. Human activities were selected to direct our interests toward the landscape around rather than toward the real lives of human figures. Because in philosophical discourse, it offered an imaginary escape from the boredom of official’s lives and proclaimed the message of people who pursue simple life in nature instead of really dedicating to making money or advancing the political careers.

³ The original text is 山水中点景人物诸式不可太工亦不可太无势，全要与山水有顾盼。人似看山，山亦似俯而看人，琴须听月，月亦似静而听琴，方使观者有恨不跃如其内，与画中人争坐位，不尔，则山自山人自人，翻不如倪。

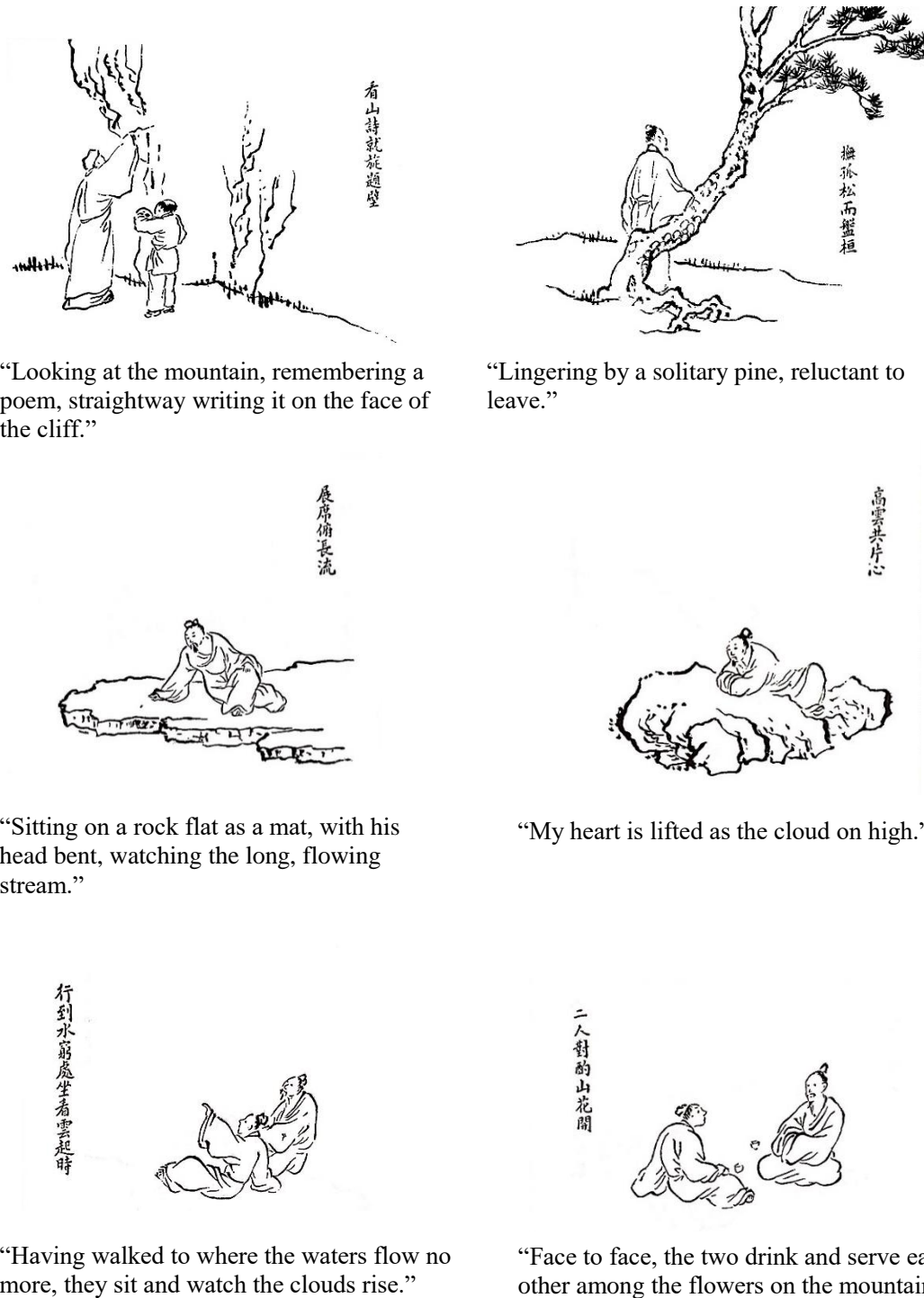


Fig 4-12. Poetic conventions on drawing human figure's interaction with landscape. Selected works from *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, the fascicle of people and houses. (Mai-mai Sze, 1978)



Fig 4-13. Xu Bing. Collage work of *Mustard Seed Garden Landscape Scroll*. 2009. 34.2 x 820.9 cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Contemporary Chinese artist Xu Bing (B. 1955) studied the manual *Mustard Seed Garden Landscape* on its particular format of print. This comes into his new collage work the *Mustard Seed Garden Landscape Scroll* (Fig 4-13). Though transformed to the medium of scroll, this new work continued the traditional approach of printing, but the ordering system of the same materials results from a modern way of looking. The new process of collaging fragments is similar to the traditional print system of words or landscape modules. The creativity lies not in the looking of the modules, but in the way of ordering them.

Xu Bing also explored the script system of Chinese calligraphy and he developed a new script system for writing English called “square word calligraphy”. With this system, the letters of each English word are organized into structures that resemble Chinese characters (Fig 4-14). Letters are composed of strokes and words by letters. It also reveals a great difference between two language systems, as argued by art historian Ledderose (1998): “Calligraphy enjoyed the highest artistic position in China while in the West it was a peripheral specialty.”



Fig 4-14. Xu Bing. The instruction of new script system *Square Word Calligraphy*. And an example of how to write the English text “ART FOR THE PEOPLE (XU BING)” with this system.

Chinese people use the words “read”, “watch” and “appreciate” to describe the manner of seeing and viewing. To read a painting is to treat an image as a text by the durational eye scanning. And to “watch”, more than to “look at”, is to see with a worldview.

4.2.1 To See and to Paint with the Worldview

Around the first century AD, the Taoist seekers already had adopted the Immortality to the name of Tao. Mountains were believed to be where the Immortals live. In the third century AD, seven sages gathered among hills to discuss Taoism. When a layman approached them to complain about sage Liu Ling's sitting naked in his hut, the sage answered: "I take the whole world as my house and my own room as my clothing. Why then do you enter here, into my trousers?" For the Taoism ideal, one's trousers, house, and the universe were interchangeable, unity with all things. Because in the idea of Chinese philosophy, everything in existence is composed of the basic material: the breath (气 *Qi*). When the breath is light and pure it rises to become heaven, when muddy and heavy it falls to form the earth. But the breath that blends both heaven and earth, becomes the man who stands midway (Keswick, 1980). Through the contemplation of nature, one can achieve the Taoist ideal. That is why the pavilions, temples, and cottages appear in landscape paintings. Taoist also believes in "no action contrary to nature", so we can see that the ancient Chinese never tried to dominate nature by their buildings. They treat their existences as a drop of water in the sea and their whole lifetime as an ephemeral flash in the passing of time since the universe is so great and time is so consistently extending.

Taoists looked on man not as the measure of all things but as an inseparable part of the great Universe whereas Confucian emphasized on man's place in society. Taoism sought to discover how this Universe worked to remove people from worldly concerns whereas Confucianism obeys the rituals and duties of a well-organized society. The practical Chinese people found both ideologies valuable and applied them side by side. Though the Chinese buildings mirrored the Confucian desire to regulate human society by setting hierarchies with their locations, the buildings still are articulated by semi-enclosures and voids of yards. Thus the *Qi* could go through the whole complex. City life reflects the Confucian's social obligation, but by the Taoism believe, one also long for the secluded life during social upheavals. However, once he served the court-office, it was not easy to escape. To balance both ideologies, the solution lays in recreating nature more accessible in gardens. Garden-pavilions provide places in nature for contemplation whilst keeping the accessibility to the civilized world.

Equally, although one cannot travel far to real mountains, he can still fulfill the longing for wandering in nature by the journey of paintings. Although confined by social obligations in the city, one could still fulfill the wish of retreat by living in the hermitage of paintings. By Guo Xi's account, the significance of landscape is to reproduce the wandering and living experience of the mountains. Landscape of the later centuries was to become even more an expression of inner experience, philosophical, poetic, or emotional. Furthermore,

Buddhism which was introduced in China in the first century AD, with its emphasis on human beings' suffering of the illusory nature of the world, lends a third, spiritual dimension to Chinese thought. The basic thinking of Buddhism *Chan* 禅 (*Zen*, in Japanese) was well expressed by the compositional emptiness in Mu Xi's painting. The emergence of a new literary society in the late Tang and early Song periods, in which Confucianists, Taoist, and Buddhists mingled freely, created a harmonized synthesis of the three philosophies. The Literati class tended to shift the meaning from the world outside to the inner mindedness. An artist painted to create a world with the working of his mind and his world of landscape represented the longed-for alternative to the involvement with worldly affairs. Therefore, literati paintings are always engaged in untroubled occupations-strolling, playing music, listening to the wind in the pines – occupations that signified harmony with the natural world.

For more than one thousand years since the Tang dynasty, liveliness has been accepted as the highest standard of judging paintings. Xie He (ca. 500-535) introduced six principles⁴ to paint in *The old Classified Record of Painter*. He first used the key term “spiritual resonance” as an ultimate goal to achieve in landscape paintings. It means that through a vitalizing spirit, a painting should possess the movement of life.

Another essential term “proper planning in placing of elements” means more than to settle the location of the pictorial elements. Landscape is also a place for human activities and how to arrange the elements is how to treat man's place in nature. By the qualities of attractiveness or flavor, rather than by outward appearances, the artist responds to his eyes and accords with his heart in accord with his paintings. This concept underlies the landscape paintings as making one feel as if he were really into the place depicted. (Cahill, 1972, p. 25) For this reason, a cartographic image can represent also the mapmaker's memories and reflections, as a means of enriching one's subjective world or emotional experience. Space is transformed into a place as it acquires definition and meaning.

⁴ Six principles in this treatise are “Spirit Resonance 气韵生动”, “Structural method in the use of the brush 骨法用笔”, “Conform with the objects to give likeness 应物象形”, “apply colors according to the characters 随类赋彩”, “proper planning in placing of elements 经营位置” and “to transmit models by drawing 传移模写”.

4.3 Conventional Schemes on Painting and Watching Chinese Painting

Based on the basic attitudes to paint a Chinese painting, there is poetry in an artist's painting and painting in his poetry. If the painting semantics is a prosaic description, everyone can get the meaning without difficulty. However, to understand the language of poetic paintings, we need to arouse all our imaginations and penetrate in the atmosphere created by the painter as well as to follow the painter's indications and find out his intentions of certain creation, because the semiotics underlined in a poet-painter's works are normally subtle suggestions instead of prosaic descriptions, just like the unsaid parts of a poem.

But as a visual art, the semiotic is still visible in painting and similar compositional patterns could persist over many centuries in Chinese paintings because there are strong cultural conventions behind it. It is not just a matter of motifs in common, but the whole pictorial structures and meaning beyond the paintings. In order to find out what is underlined in a painting behind its appearance, we have to follow the painter's indications. And the clue is the visual stations of a painting.

Visual Station and Indication

“A range in panorama, peaks if viewed from the side;
Far, near, low, and high, these summits differ wide.
The true face of Mount Lushan, O ‘tis so hard to tell,
Because this very mountain, has had me right inside.”

-Su Shi

Written on the Wall of Xilin Temple⁵

In this poem of Su Shi, depending on our visual stations, the Mount Lushan takes on different shapes. Seen from the front, it is a continuous and rolling range, while seen from the side, it turns into a single towering peak. The visual station is where our eyes focus in the painting. Whereas by this poem, or by Guo Xi’s three distances, the Chinese artists do not aim merely at depicting the scenery or the personal feelings, they attempt to enlighten the spectator with a philosophy of understanding things with a macrocosmic view.

Instead of a scientific and geometric view, when we watch a Chinese painting, we should interpret the particular visual system in terms of station point and visual direction. And both terms involve the movement of the body. The relationship between body and image is established by making us wander or dwell in paintings. To understand how the experience is achieved, we should consider it on the notions between painting, painter and viewer.

Painters use visual stations to conceive the pictorial composition of space as well as to establish the relationships with viewers. Rather than a fixed location where the observer is supposed to be, Chinese painting indicates basic visual directions when the image moves or when the observer moves. It is through the dynamic interchange between the observer and the thing observed that man is able to grasp the working of the universe. The way to see is a cultural issue as well as the way to paint because both indicate our observations of the world. Painters express their philosophical schemas of the real world by paintings and they are also trying to direct viewers by the visual directions in their paintings.

⁵ English Translation by Andrew W.F. Wong. The original text is “横看成岭侧成峰，远近高低各不同。不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中。”-题西林壁

4.3.1 Glance and Gaze, Moving Focus, Durational Space

Large view of the small

As introduced in chapter 2, Zong Bing firstly advocates the concept of distance philosophically in painting. In Song dynasty, Guo Xi developed Zong Bing's distance more practically to "three distances" in painting landscape. Almost by the same era, another scholar, Shen Kuo, concluded the approach of distances and established the theory on watching called "以大观小 (large view of the small)". Poetically, Shen Kuo thinks that the main purpose of landscape painting is to re-create a dreamy journey that is far beyond a simple resemblance to nature. In *Casual writings from the Garden of the Stream of Dreams*⁶, he said: "The general view is subtle in the mechanism of high and low, far and near, rather than simply uncovering the roof corner!" Because Shen Kuo thinks artist Li Cheng's faithful representation of an upward roof corner with details is meaningless. In another word, painters should not attach too much importance to the diminution of heights and distances so accurately. Shen Kuo advocates that all landscape has to be viewed from the angle of totality to behold the part. Shen Kuo also extends this idea to painting and seeing paintings by saying:

In general, the method of landscape painting is to take a large view of the small, as when a person observes an artificial mountain. If it were the same as the method for viewing a real mountain, looking up from below, one would see only a single layer of the mountain; how can one see a layer on layer, or its valleys and forges and other details? Similarly, in the case of dwellings and houses, one would not see what was happening in their courtyards and in the lanes behind them.⁷

As said by the ancient Chinese: "We need to stress the general trend when viewing the work at a distance, and essence when taking a close look⁸". This reflects the way of viewing a Chinese painting. Norman Bryson (1986, pp. 87-117) also claims that in Chinese visual tradition, what really matters is the particular manner of representing rather than the object represented. And the visual field is the vision on our mental screen instead of on the retinal one. He called this infinite expansion of poetic vision the "glance". The glance expanded the visual field whereas the gaze contemplates it; the glance "shifts to conceal its own

⁶ the original text is 以大观小之法，其间折高、折远，自由妙理，岂在掀屋角也！From 梦溪笔谈 *Casual writings from the Garden of the Stream of Dreams*.

⁷ Translation from (Cahill, 1972)

⁸ 远观取其势，近观取其质

existence” whereas the gaze “arrests the flux of phenomena”; painting of glance is “of the temporality of real-time process” whereas painting of the gaze “breaks with the real-time of durational practice”.

Chinese scholars Wang & Tong (1981) use the concept of “near and far” to explain this approach of “glance and gaze”. For example, the Mao’s house in mount Shao could be painted in detail like shown in a photo, but in the traditional way, the artist would place the house from meters away to hundreds of meters away (Fig 4-15). In this way, when a near object is positioned far, no perspective is needed to represent the house. It is what Shen Kuo called “以大观小(watching the part from the angle of totality)”.



Fig 4-15. Near and far: a near house positioned afar from the viewer. (Wang & Tong, 1981, p. 15)

While in another case, if an object located far from us is taken right at feet, it will be called “以小观大(large view of the small)”. For example, in the painting (Fig 4-16), the weather station is still located in the far and high mountain, but with its unreal scale and details, it seems close to us.

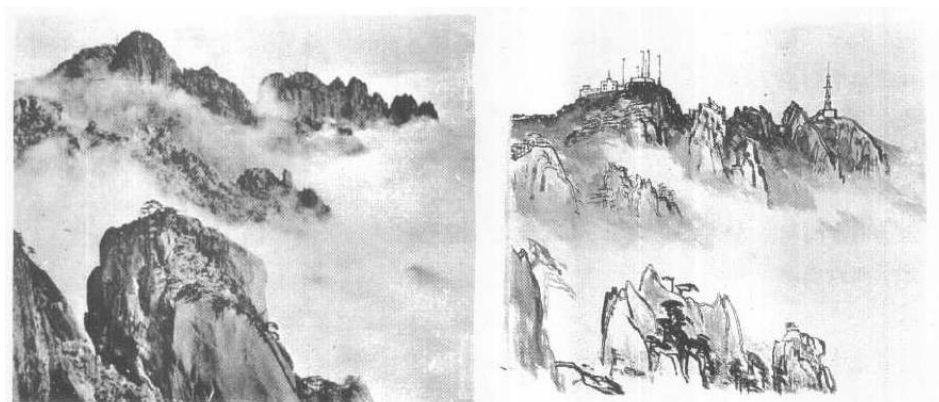


Fig 4-16. Near and far: a faraway weather station with detail looks closed to the viewer. (Wang & Tong, 1981, p. 16)

Moving Focus

Porter(1997) describes that “when perceiving physical space, we can look up, down and sideways and collect information even at the periphery of our field of vision. The movements of head and eye set the visual environment in motion. We can adjust by focusing on points in the far distance and points near at hand. The center of visual attention in the eye, the foveal area, gathers information about shape and pattern by making many rapid eye fixations- a process which literally paints- in a reconstruction of given stimuli.” Chinese painting is more “real” in this sense. Because paintings are composited with multiple viewpoints to make viewers move their focuses like that they are perceiving actual spaces. When seeing a painting with some distance, we get the general idea of what is included in the painting. With shifting focuses of the viewing subject, the painter’s own location to the subject is concealed.

This visual scanning process is an issue-oriented operation, so people with quite different motives and interests will view the same scene in quite different ways. The expression of multiple viewpoints congested more information into one scene, therefore, the pictorial spaces become rich and people can stay a longer time in the painting and likewise reading a poetry, letting their imaginations fly. On sheet maps of restricted length, this technique could be adapted to create multiple ground planes: one might have to imagine oneself rotating, instead of moving laterally, in order to view the depicted objects correctly. Both Chinese painting and poetry focus on the shift between experiential space and time, and the intention is to create a journey by the movements. “watching(观)” in the saying of Shen Kuo implies the looking with the mind. Watching, in this sense, is more similar to reading than looking, it is subjective and involves observer’s meditation and penetration.

Durational Space

“Eastern and Western concepts of time are as different as the two conceptions of space.” (Shlain, 1991, p. 163) When Guo Xi said that we need to view mountains “step by step and face by face”, he means that the observation of nature should involve an embodied perception and should be in motion. And the reason has everything to do with the Chinese concern of time. Chinese people do not believe that time could be static present with a past and a future. In a metaphor, they liken time to a river and human awareness to a man standing on its bank facing downstream. Therefore, Chinese painting is full of everlasting symbolic instead of masses and volumes. For the Chinese artists, since time can never be frozen, things in painting must be vitalized.

Due to this reason, the line drawn by a brush remains the central fact of Chinese painting throughout its history from the beginning to the end. With Chinese calligraphy, full vitality of strength changes by brushwork is accommodated within a limited space. Each section of a character is completed stroke by stroke to form a larger design. Sharing the same instrument of brush, in Chinese paintings, artists give great emphasis to the brush line itself rather than reproducing faithfully the color and the texture of surfaces or masses. Similar to calligraphy, the fulfillment of Chinese scroll originates from the experience of seeing early paintings that are sequences of pictorial motifs to be read like many pictographs. It is conditioned by “the isolation of motifs”, “the movement of the eye through intervals”, and “the tying together of each motif to its adjacent motifs”. (Rowley, 1974, p. 61) The lateral movement carried our attention from right to left from section to section, scene by scene; and each scene is a great painting itself.

When viewing a handscroll, one normally will not unroll the entire painting, even if he does, he will go closer and view it scene by scene instead of looking at it from a distance as we do when looking at a western painting. In accordance with the traditional viewing practice, when one begins to unroll the scroll from right to left, section by section with the shoulder-width (about 60cm), he pauses to appreciate and reroll a section before proceeding to the next one. The viewing of a scroll is an intimate process involved with the viewer’s body movements (Fig 4-17. a). In another way, when a scroll does not move, what moves is the viewer or his gaze (Fig 4-17. b). The relation between viewer and painter is established by the narration of scroll as Wu (1996) said: “In terms of both painting and viewing, a handscroll is literally a moving picture, with shifting moments and loci.”

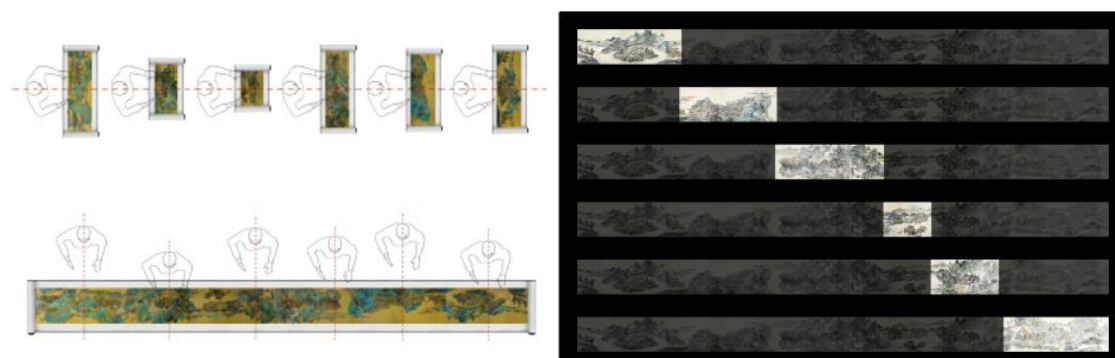


Fig 4-17. Wang Fei. The process of viewing a scroll (a) and cinematic sequence of a scroll (b). Cited from the dissertation *The Interaction Between Ancient Chinese Painting and Classical Garden: with Case Study on Nine Suzhou Classical Gardens*. Wang Fei. 2012, p and 72, p. 80.

To understand the language of scroll paintings, we must consider its durational experience as music, film or literature. Similar to the reading process, Chinese painting addresses the vision in the durational temporality. Our attention is carried along laterally, being restricted at any one moment to a short passage which can be conveniently perused. Like precious books, some Chinese silk scrolls were kept rolled up in precious containers and unrolled only in quiet moments of contemplation. In addition to their descriptive meaning, contemplation of pictures arouses corresponding feelings in the heart, it is as if one really comes to visit these places. As a whole, a scroll is also like a piece of music, having a beginning, a development, and an ending. Many scrolls parallel the musical sequence of exposition, development, and recapitulation, and others have a definite climax like a drama. The composition of this long painting qualifies the artist's design thinking on making a seamless collage that take the viewer into the journey. Good film directors are good at that, too. When director intends to tell an attractive story, they cut and combine frames by editing techniques.

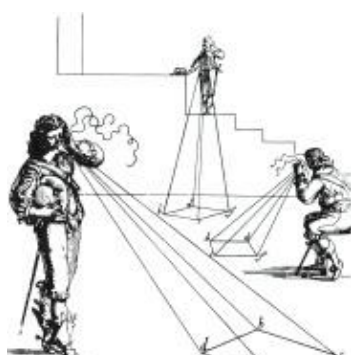


Fig 4-18. After the invention of the camera this contradiction gradually became apparent (Berger, 1972, p. 7)

Berger (1972) claimed that our ways of seeing painting totally changed after the invention of the camera, especially the movie camera. The convention of perspective centers everything on the eye of the beholder and makes the spectator the unique center of the visible world. But the invention of the camera demonstrated that there was no center and nothing converged on the human eye as on the vanishing point of infinity as the ideal. "The invention of the camera changed the way men saw. The visible came to mean something different to them. This was immediately reflected in painting. (Berger, 1972)" Scrolls are often too long to be viewed all at once comparing to paintings in frames. To gaze at one moment with linear perspective, the medium of a camera-like panel like the one that Brunelleschi used in his experiment is enough. But to

present a shift vision between glance and gaze, many panels are needed, and all must be coherent. The scroll format was invented for a continuous vision. With a scroll, the glance and gaze view can be generated at the same time and moving focus can be advocated in painting.

In today's image-leading turn, our ways of seeing are controlled by the popular culture and where cameras direct us to gaze. Though not limited to the perspective of one vanishing point, our visions are still forced to see what is happening in one place at one time by images. Instead, the scroll does not control our station points by limiting the focus in a gaze, it offers the spectator many options to enter the painting. The experience of viewing a scroll is a revelation. As one unrolls the scroll, he has no idea what is coming next: each section presents a new surprise like in a film. Whereas by controlling the progression, the spectator kindly becomes the director of this film-like scene. The viewer's wandering experience made him a participator of the painting. For this reason, you do not feel boring even watching a painting for hours. The durational space depends on lateral movement rather than on movement in depth. Because the design of time arises from the unique attitude toward space instead of space itself. The field of vision is not dominant but reciprocal, involved with the interaction between painting and viewer.

4.3.2 Disclose and Conceal, Suggestion, Articulation of Spaces

Indicators of conceptual space

When appreciating a Chinese scroll, one should not expect a thorough comprehension just by one glance, it requires also the gaze of meditation for a synthesis of vision. The medium of scroll enables the contemplation because once you can only read one scene by a scroll, and in an intimate view you can get involved by the painting. Meanwhile, you also expect scenes to spread out by unrolling it. The attractive journey corresponds the curiosity as if one really has been visiting the place.

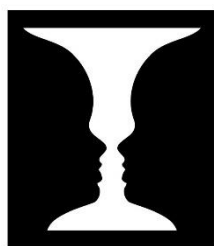


Fig 4-19. Gestalt thinking. *Rubin's vase*

In Gestalt thinking, the visual perception is about to see the form in an object and to detect the object's location in space. The figure-ground model established a conceptual space rather than a physical one. "As opposed to the psychological dimension of behavioral space and the tactility and measurability of physical space, conceptual space is that which we perceive and visualize." (Porter, 1997) By a form-orientated thinking, we can see a vase shape defined by the contours. Whereas by switching to a conceptual thinking, we will discover two face-profiles by transforming the negative form to a positive one. The void becomes tangible and the ambiguity of the reversible figure makes the space dynamic.

Similar to the vase, many elements in Chinese paintings serve as indicators for the whole conceptual compositions rather than depicted objects themselves, depending on the ways of seeing. In lateral landscape scrolls like *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, *Autumn Colors on Rivers and Mountains* (Fig 2-3), and *Living in the Fuchun Mountains* (Fig 2-9), water and mists, not only create a mysterious atmosphere, but also separate as well as connect groups of mountains and islands. To emphasize the vastness of nature and its infinite capacity for expansion in landscape painting, Guo Xi advises the painter to suggest rather than to delineate completely (Fong, 1992, p. 86):

If one wishes to make a mountain appear high, one must not paint every part of it or it will seem diminished. It will look tall when encircled at mid-height by mist and clouds. If one wishes to describe a stream that stretches afar, one must not paint its entire course; only when its course is shaded and interrupted will it appear long.

The blank areas between the three distances serve as perceptual respites, inviting the viewer to roam freely through a space that is infinite because space is unmeasured and immeasurable. The atmosphere perspective is a method to create the illusion of space and distance by depicting objects in a progressively lighter tone as they recede into depth, suggesting the intervention of atmosphere between them and the viewer.

However, large empty areas left of the picture space aim not only to let us complete it in our imagination. The Chinese painter deliberately avoids a complete statement because he knows that we can never know everything, that what we can describe, or complete, cannot be true, except in a very limited scene. All he can do is to liberate the imagination and set it wandering over the limitless spaces of the universe. His landscape is not a final statement, but a starting-point; not an end, but the opening of a door.

In vertical landscape paintings of seclusion themes, our passage through each picture is clearly laid out. Starting from the bottom, the closest point of a daily-life scene is typically located with a village, thatched houses of lower class people, or travelers with a mule train. From this, we move upward and into the picture, usually with a Buddhist temple as the apparent goal, but with great untouched and unattainable peaks still looming above by mists and clouds. They suggest a passage of spiritual ascension from one closed-in to one opening-up, from the reality to an ideality.

The convention of disclose and conceal is not only achieved by the blankness of landscape paintings. In cityscape paintings, like *Along the River during Qingming Festival* and *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* (Fig 2-15), we can also find the conceptual indicators. Instead uncertain clouds, mists and water, the artificial elements like streets and canals separate as well as connect both sides of streets or riverbanks to conform conceptual spaces of daily lives. In a middle scale, yards and pavilions suggest the ambiguity between positive and negative spaces. Yet in a small scale, enclosures like gates, windows, and screens in cityscape paintings and novel illustrations are the conceptual indicators. They are always half-open half-closed, and sometimes with a human figure is half hidden behind a door, a window or a screen. As stages, the enclosures display the performance of human lives, and as indicators, they imply the ambiguity of a series of in-between relations – between here and there, now and then. In various scales, these semi-open indicators in Chinese paintings play both positive and negative roles in the conceptual spaces between the void spaces and the solid ones. The space between buildings is just as potent as the spaces they contain.

The prevailed Perspective in the West considers that space could be defined abstractly, as a static entity and therefore organizable and measurable. Whereas in the Chinese conception of space, the experience is dynamic and fluid, intimately related to one's experience of time.

Space and emptiness were regarded almost as an entity in itself, as such, it was boundless and unlimited. Space is always changing with the change of time. As a result, no abstract geometrical system governed space, and station points within it were not definable in any absolute terms. The difference in the two treatments of space leads to differences in the graphic treatment of presenting three-dimensional space on a plane surface. The Chinese conception of space tends to present embodied experiences rather than to represent visual sensations which comfort the eyes.

Display on Frontality and Imply on Obliqueness

Arnheim (1974, p.251) referred to Chinese landscape painting in the chapter of *space on depth by overlapping*:

The space-building role of superposition in Chinese landscape painting is well known. The relative location of mountain peaks or clouds is established visually by overlaps, and the volume of a mountain is often conceived as a skeleton of echelons or slices in staggered formation. The complex curvature of the solid is thus obtained through a kind of “integral” based on the summation of frontal planes.

The basic Chinese visual structures of landscape representation can be seen in the diagrams made by art scholar Wen Fong (Fig 4-20). In the diagram, additives are buildup step-by-step along receding ground planes. Following the archaic convention that more distant elements are rendered higher and smaller on the picture plane. (Fong, 2003).

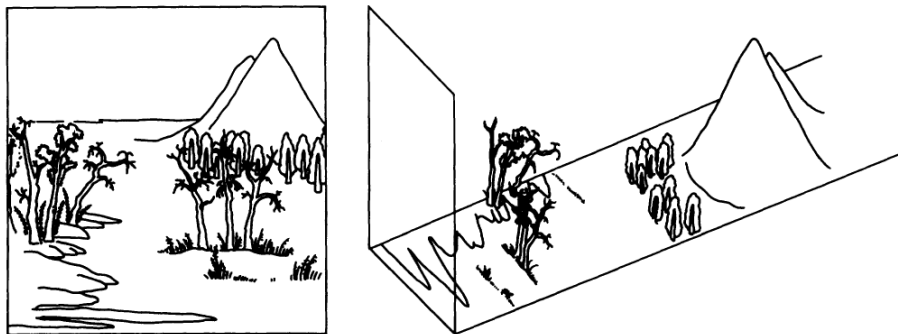


Fig 4-20. Wen Fong. Diagrams of Zhao Mengfu, *Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains*. (Fong, 2003).



Fig 4-21. Zhao Mengfu, *Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains*, 1296. National Palace Museum, Taipei

In the psychological theory of Rudolf Arnheim, at an early level, a child represents the body of a house (not a front face but the whole cube) as a simple square (Fig 4-22. a), on the next stage, two side faces are added to the front face as a differentiation (Fig 4-22. b), and on the third stage, obliqueness is perceived as recession into depth and thus the frontal dimension and depth dimension are differentiated. (Arnheim, 1974, p. 263)

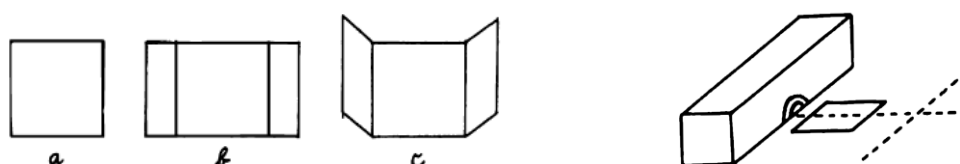


Fig 4-22. Children's perception of a cube in three stages. Fig 4-23. Isometric perspective with frontality

In Chinese paintings, a building is conventionally represented with a frontal face paralleled to viewers and oblique faces indicating the distance. Arnheim (1974, p.267) explained that "If used as an architectural setting in a painting, the frontal façade provides a stabilizing backdrop for displays within the frontal plane, such as pageants or other figural scenes...Having abandoned every element of frontality, the pictorial object moves much more freely."

This explanation can aid us to understand the purpose of the frontality-obliqueness scheme in Chinese paintings. Although architectures always appear in paintings, in most of the cases they are not the main roles. The frontal facades are normally set paralleled to us and a door or a gate will be wide open even in a winter scene. The frontal faces are stages to display the human's occupation. And the obliqueness indicates the underlined visual directions.

This way of representing architecture has been used for centuries in Chinese painting because for displaying a static scene, a single vanishing point is enough, but for creating a durational space in a scroll, the balance of time and space is required. To turn to Perspective means to give up the diachrony of spaces. Whereas by a Chinese scroll, an artist can delicately juxtapose horizontal and vertical axes. From right to left in the horizontal direction, the basis for the narration indicates a temporal depth. From front to back in a vertical or oblique direction, the spatial depth is suggested in the sense of deep distance. The diachrony of the horizontal and the synchrony of the vertical are balanced when a scroll asks us to join it in any one of several possible places.

4.4 The Potential of Poetic Narration in Architecture

Architecture is judged by eyes that see, by the head that turns, and the legs that walk. Architecture is not a synchronic phenomenon but a successive one, made up of pictures adding themselves one to the other, following each other in time and space, like music.

- Le Corbusier, *The Modulor*, I

4.4.1 The Introduction of Time in Architecture

A static perspective of a framed representation fixes its viewer's visual station to the pictorial space as well as the user's location to the building. Under a perspective-direct architecture, buildings become visual display centered for eye's comfort in an absolute point of view. On this concern, linear perspective was completely abandoned in the early twentieth century by Cubist painters who seek for multi points of view towards a single object. From a moving point of reference, time was revolutionarily introduced to the conception of space. Giedion (1967) believes that Cubism was not an invention of one single artist like Picasso, "but a product of a collective and almost unconscious attitude". It was possible for the first time to shift ideas away from being static and many implementers around Europe directed it into architecture, at the same time rationalized it. New trends in painting innovated architecture not directly on forms, but firstly on a new vision. Seeing the existence of time, architecture has revolutionarily stepped into a modern era.

The architectural narration begins with the reexamination of spatial transparency. The key aspect to Rowe and Slutzky's seminal essay *Transparency: Literal & Phenomenal* is the distinction of the two types of transparency. Rowe and Slutzky describes Le Corbusier's Villa at Garches as an example of phenomenal transparency. Originated from Cubism paintings, the phenomenal transparency of architecture is achieved mainly through devices of frontality and stratification. Both in painting and in architecture, the frontal planes are layered in order to construct and to articulate space. (Rowe & Slutzky, 1982). Layering can convey movement, thought, or the passage of time. Phenomenal transparency can be understood as conceptual rather perceptual because it engages the mind of the viewer to interpret and understand successive layered spaces.

The layering and stratification of frontal planes is evident in both Le Corbusier's paintings and his built works (Fig 4-24 and Fig 4-25).



Fig 4-24. Layering of frontal planes. Le Corbusier's Still Life, 1920 & Axonometric of it.

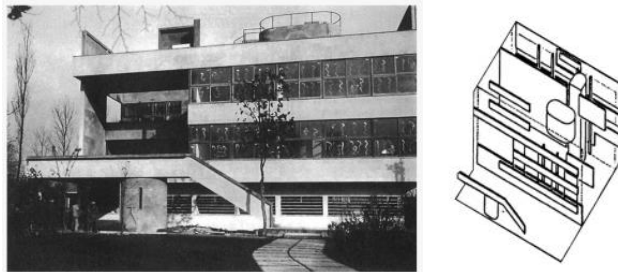


Fig 4-25. Layering of frontal planes. Le Corbusier's Villa Stein at Garches 1927/28 & Axonometric of it.

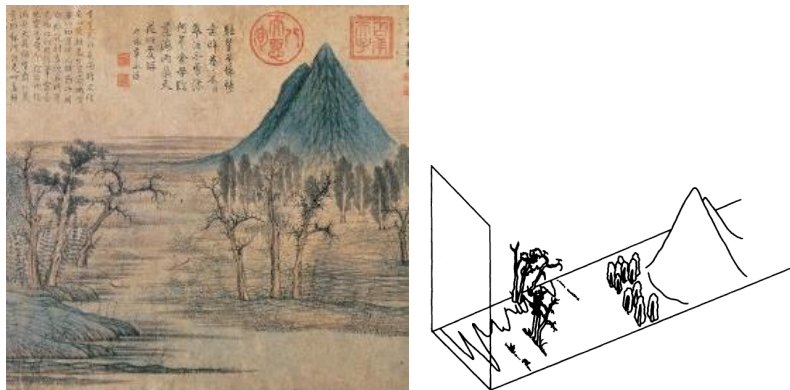


Fig 4-26. Layering of frontal planes. Zhao Mengfu, *Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains* (Section of Fig 4-19), 1296. & Wen Fong's Diagram of it. 2003 (Section of Fig 4-18)

The Chinese understanding of space is also conceptual because in a Chinese painting, the layering and stratification of frontal planes spaces also require one's interpretation (Fig 4-26). If literal transparency means primarily for the sensation of the eye due to an overlapping of material or substance, the depth of a Chinese painting is also phenomenal.

4.4.2 The Narrative Potential of Chinese Paintings

But notably, the diagram of Zhao Mengfu's painting was partly cut off for a section when scholar Wen Fong used it as an example to explain the term of spatial depth of Chinese painting (Fig 4-26). The original painting is a scroll of two mountains named Que and Hua and the diagram has only represented one of them. With the framed cut, the information about another mountain and the way to get there is disappeared. What is missing in the diagram is just what the length of scroll implies. Therefore, a speculation arouses: since the length of a scroll expanded the context of a scene, literally and phenomenally, does it have the narrative potential to present more contexts for architect (Fig 4-27)?

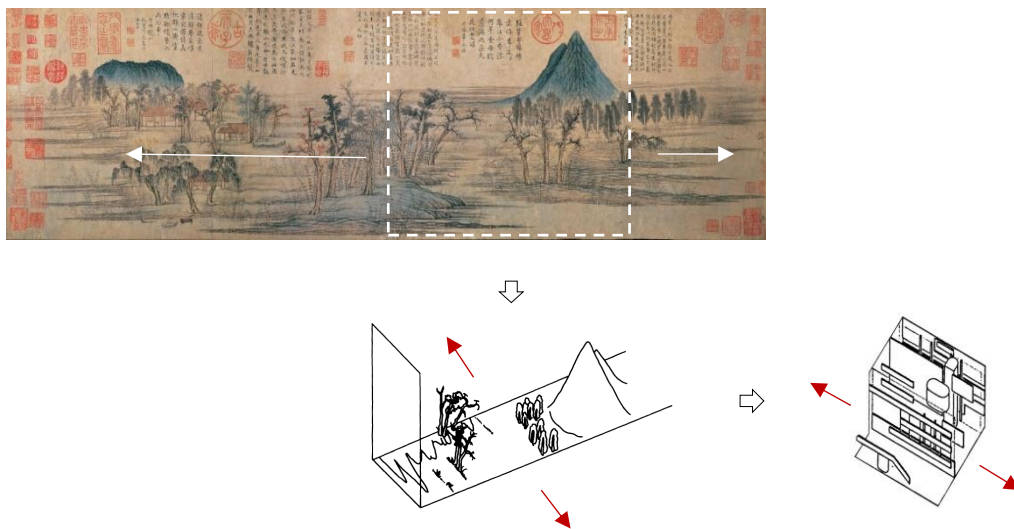


Fig 4-27. Drawn by the author. Phenomenal length of a scroll painting and its potential for architectural representation of context.

Some explorations have focused on the phenomenal length of narration since cinema won photography for the need of expressing time. As Tschumi argued, cinematic frames and sequences offer new order for experiencing space, movement and time. Rem Koolhaas also describe his work of architecture as that of a filmmaker, thinking through his buildings as a sequence of scenes and cuts that he arranges along an elaborate path. But even films have a much narrower field of view than the human eye. The sense of movement at the edge of the image is missing. The privilege of drawing to cinema is discussed in the article *Space, Time and Perspective in the Construction of the Contemporary Architectural Gaze: from Hockney to Miralles*:

“If we analyze cinema, the other modern invention about visual narration or sharing ways of vision, we realize how movement and time are included too, but the time is there previously set by the film director and it is, therefore, the same for everybody; and so are the sequence and priority of attentions and shape of the frame. Cinema is thus closer to perspective or instant photography than it is to drawing, to cubist painting or to the photographic mosaic collage where we can always choose time, order, sequence, rhythm and intensity for our observation.”

The article also introduced architect Enric Miralles’s particular method to express time in his design process, relating to the English painter David Hockney’s photocollage (Fig 4-30):

In the design stage, cross-sections are systematically avoided; perspectives, either showing environmental pre-existent or design elements, give place to photographic mosaics in David Hockney’s way; in those, you cannot find a dominant structuring point of view, but a trip of the eye following what could be the spontaneous exploration route all over the place made by an observer.



Fig 4-28. Enric Miralles y Benedetta Tagliabue. Frankfurt: EL CROQUIS no 72. “Enric Miralles”. El Croquis editorial. Madrid, 1995. p. 12.



Fig 4-29. David Hockney. *Photographing Annie Leibovitz while she photographs me*. 1983. Source: *David Hockney: Camera Works*. 1984. Thames and Hudson.



Fig 4-30. David Hockney. *Sunday Morning Mayflower Hotel*. New York. 1982. Source: *David Hockney: Camera Works*. 1984. Thames and Hudson.

It is believed that Miralles adopted Hockney's photomontage technique from the very moment he discovered it. But more than a technique, the artist had inspired Miralles a new way to perceive the surroundings, and to express the perception in a range of possibilities. As Hockney said: "you enjoy that experience and the pleasure is not in the subject you look but in the very act of looking." Comparing to phenomenal transparency that looks from a

building's façade to its layers of depth, photocollage has extended the gazes from the phenomenal depth to the narrative length. But is more subjective than a film. For example, Miralles's collage expressed his concern of the spatial depth as well as the duration, and the expression is objective (including rich information of the context) as well as subjective (with his own perception). It is very similar to a Chinese scroll, but made by camera instead of brush.

Hockney had really produced a movie for the visual experience of seeing a Chinese scroll painting (Fig 4-31). The movie's title *Day on the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China* is followed the scroll's title *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* (Fig 2-15). David Hockney thought that a film would be the better way to present this painting because "comparing to a book which has too many edges that go over itself, a film itself is a scroll". But he adds: "a scroll is a picture without edges, it is not a window, because you can control the edges to make it different pictures, but camera got edges and decide where you look."

In this documentary, he also brought us a discourse on the comparison between eastern and western perspective with his own artistic vision. "In reality the lines are always parallel and crossed with each other, never converged. In the mode of perspective, there is a pictorial frame with edges and a vanishing point which means infinity. The viewer stands out of the frame and if he moves, the vanishing point moves, but they will never meet with each other. And in a scroll, the triangle route is reversed so the spectator can see both sides and infinity is everywhere including the viewer." (Fig 4-32)



Fig 4-31. (Left) Hockney looking at a Chinese scroll. Source: film (*Day on the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China*, 1988)

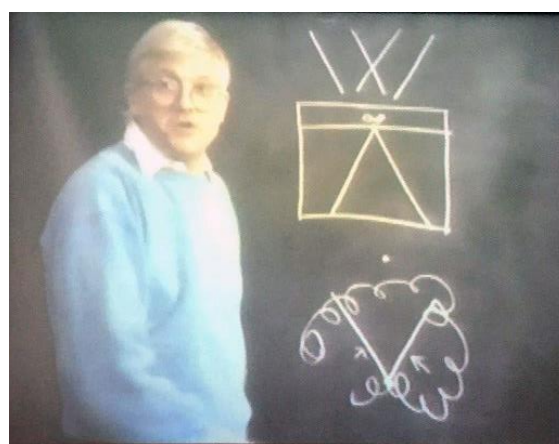


Fig 4-32. (Right) Western and Chinese modes of perspective. Source: (Ibid.)

The conceptual stance of looking into or at a two-dimensional illusion of space had not been the case in pictorial treatments of all cultures. In oriental art vanishing lines radiated away from the spectator into a wider concept of space- a reversed perspective which in positioning the mind's eye behind the picture plane, allowed the artist to visualize from "inside" the concept. Michael Sullivan said that Chinese landscape paintings involve the viewers imagination at an almost physical level, creating a feeling of wandering through a scene rather than absorbing it from a fixed point. (Day on the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China, 1988)

In Hockney's theory, comparing to converged lines of perspective, parallel lines in painting are more real because the in reality, planes of objects are parallel and we do not see things just in one eye. The axonometries demonstrate the layered configurations of both works of Le Corbusier (Fig 4-24 and Fig 4-25); they appear to stretch out the various constituent layers of their flattened conditions as painting or elevation.

But a traditional Chinese painting is not equal to axonometry because it is never scientific. For example, the painting *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* represented scenes based on visual narration instead of objective transcription of three-dimensional spaces. It is not scientific even "faulty" but the spatial depiction became less about recording a fixed view and more about presenting a space in midst of narrative (Fig 4-33).



Fig 4-33. Section from Fig 2-15



Fig 4-34. Scene of houses from Fig 4-19.

Similarly, on the left part of the scroll painting *Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains* (Fig 4-34), houses are additively buildup in sequence along a series of receding ground plane, following the archaic convention that more distant elements are rendered higher and smaller on the picture plane. Although totally contradicted to western perspective, the side face and frontal face of a house are juxtaposed just on the same ground level. The representation of houses in Zhao's painting coincidences with the mode. C of Arnheim's diagram for children's understanding of space (Fig 4-20). But is it because the Chinese painter at that time did not still know the technique of obliqueness? The answer is obviously not. The houses in the painting as early as Han dynasty already have shown clear oblique projection. Artist Zhao abandoned the spatial depth of houses in his painting, just because he wants to keep the houses in harmony with the whole environment of the painting since the realness of the spatial distance has to yield to the progression of the whole journey. The faults of spatial expression in scroll painting, actually is an attempt to order the pictorial planes to better follow the narration. This concept is similar to cubism, but not in a geometric way. However, time and space are balanced in a four-dimensional synthesis by the phenomenal length and depth of the narration.

Conclusion

The visual perception involves physically with the description of objects and also physiologically with the artist's thinking of the world. Conscious conventions such as culture and tradition largely influenced the visual perception process. The difference between a work of Eastern art and that of Western art lies mainly in the schemas behind different visual cultures. In the Chinese culture, the perceiving of space rather as knowledge is the result of a mental process which intertwines the ability of poetic thinking. One proof is that Chinese painting, calligraphy, and poetry were considered intertwined since they are called three perfections. Rather than depicting real landscape's beauty, a poem-painting is produced by the signs of both writing and painting, with a similar kind of evocative juxtapositions. Therefore, the language of a Chinese painting should be read as well as viewed. The Chinese way of seeing is strongly concerned with the worldview of artists and the merging philosophy of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. It is reflected by the conventional schemes to paint as well as to view paintings. Painters use visual stations to conceive the pictorial composition of space as well as to establish the relationships with viewers. Rather than a fixed location where the observer is supposed to be, Chinese artist indicates the dynamic interchange between the observer and the thing observed by moving their visual directions. As a result, through a glance of multiple visions, the spectator could philosophically grasp a macrocosmic view of the universe. It is the Chinese approach of representation called "large view of the small". Furthermore, in a mental vision, contrasts of near and far, big and small are juxtaposed by the moving focuses in glances and gazes, back and forth. Space becomes durational because of the format of scroll. Each section itself could be viewed as an individual painting, but together they become filmic and should be viewed literarily. In Chinese visual tradition what really matters is the particular manner of representing rather than the object represented. Rather than try to explain nature through science, Chinese artist wanted to keep alive the eternal mystery of nature which can only be suggested. The blankness of water, mists and clouds separate as well as connect a limited real world and an infinite spiritual world. Similarly, architectural enclosures in paintings are never totally open or closed. The ambiguity of in-between spaces enables breath and air to go through continuously. Frontally, the architectural elements in paintings display human activities like stages. Obliquely, they indicate the underlined visual directions. The science of perspective achieved the illusion of depth and gave measurability to the spatial unit, while the durational space created by the suggestion is immeasurable. The poetics of Chinese pictorial spaces lies in the conceptual thinking rather than the visual appearance.

Chapter 5

Contemporary Architectural Narrations Based on the Language of Chinese Paintings

No straightforward transformation between architecture and painting can be successful because any direct form-imitation of painting results in a prosaic building. Whereas the history of art and architecture is put forward never by any discipline alone, but by the reflection of one to the other. Thus, from the poetry-like language of Chinese painting, what kind of architecture can we translated to? And how to “translate” rather than “transform” a painting to an architecture? This chapter intends to answer these questions when relating painting with architecture. In the Chapter 4, on a visual-culture base, we discussed the attitude to watch and paint Chinese paintings and the conventional schemas on these procedures. Actually, the attitude towards Chinese painting is also Chinese scholar’s attitude towards human’s places in the universe; and the schemas applied by Chinese painters also brought rich inspiration to many contemporary Chinese architects and artists on their creative works. By reading their languages based on the understandings of Chinese paintings, we may encounter an architecture modernist, yet on the poetic evocation.

In the visual language of Chinese painting, station point and visual direction play important roles in understanding the schemas that communicate human's perception of the world with one's perception of a building. The matter of how to apply these schemas is actually a matter of how to direct spectators' viewpoints by painting. However, this visual language of paintings means more than what we have seen on papers.

Like other artistic disciplines engaged in poetic making- a making that attempts not imposition but disclosure, the revelation of something that is "already there" and is thus familiar to a culture while also being new- architecture during the last two centuries has suffered the limitations of potential solipsism and near nonsense. This is the syndrome of architecture made for architects...particularly when detached from language and not framed through appropriate critical questions" (Pérez-Gómez, 2016, p. 6)

On the critical translation from Cubism painting to Modernist architecture, painting's conceptual way to see means more than the perceptual forms to imitate. The difference between a transformation and a translation is that one is measurable, the other is unmeasurable; one is actual, the other is implied; one is about visibility, the other about understanding; one is about observation, the other about interpretation; one is about looking, the other about reading.

In our present times, regarding the expression of the four dimensions of architecture, several contemporary Chinese architects set good examples of proper coherence between a modern architectural option and the traditional way it is graphically expressed. Their experiments add modern value to the traditional architecture whilst still evoke familiarity to an ever-existing culture. Since the way of seeing is the main issue, we need to examine them in the design processes rather than in the built results, in the inner thinking rather than in the outer appearances. In the following sections, we will see how this traditional language is spoken by modern drawings and models, in interacted themes of urbanism, landscape and interior design.

5.1 Urban Narration of Dynamic Life in Scrolls and Panoramic Mapping

5.1.1 The Inclusive Scroll

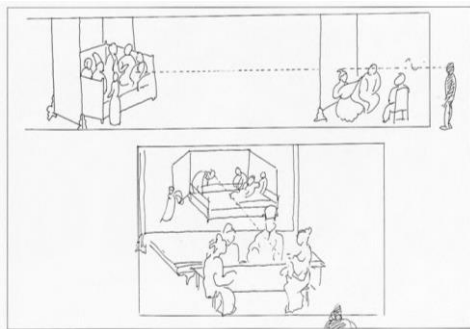


Fig 5-1. Wu Hung. Diagram of two screen painting.



Fig 5-2. Scroll painting *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai*

In Wu Hung's diagrams regarding two different ways of painting a similar scene, we can actually see two ways of thinking (Fig 5-1). In the "painting within a painting", the pictorial depth is fixed by the static view whereas, in a scroll, the spatial articulation becomes visible when screens are placed perpendicularly to the painting's plane surface. The depth of space seems to be expanded by the length of the scroll (Fig 5-2). The "space within space" mode, similar to Colin Rowe's concept of phenomenal transparency, actually advocates a prevailed seeing (also thinking) that arrests building to its own space and time. On this sense, the length of the scroll actually extends our vision from the gaze of a building to its contexts and enlarged the building's own articulation to an urban scale. Laterally, buildings pass the borders to become part of the urban context again. A scroll is especially beneficial for an urban narration of constructing commons that rather than excluding, includes the environmental conditions in a broader scope.



Fig 5-3. (Left) Chen Chi-kwan. *Street*. 1952

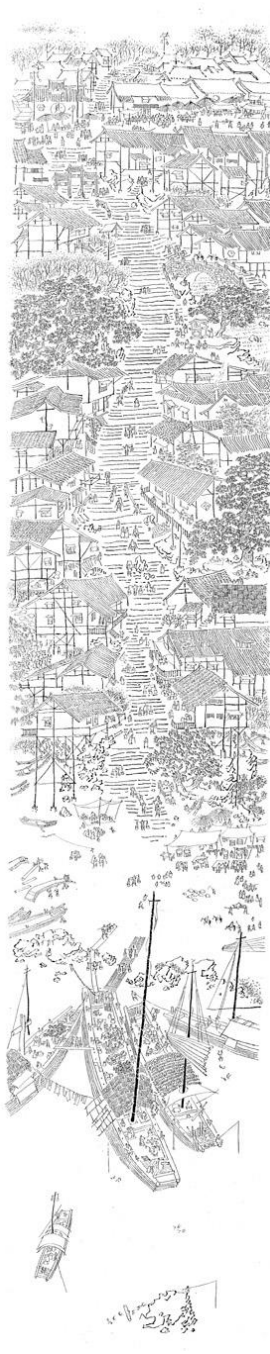


Fig 5-4. (Right) Chen Chi-kwan. *Kolo Shan and Chongqing*. 1952.

In 1952, Taiwanese artist and architect Chen Chi-kwan¹ expressed his impressions of the Chinese city Chongqing by the format of scroll. Similar to the urban scroll of *Qingming* which captured the prosperous life of the city Bianliang, primary streets are also centered in Chen's two scrolls because the length of the scroll is especially proper for the spanning of time in a long street (Fig 5-3, Fig 5-4). In the painting of *Kolo Shan*, Chen used the traditional horizontal view of handscroll and transformed it into a vertical one. With steps rising ever upwards, the zigzagging perspectives successfully creating a sense of movement (Fig 5-4). Although he also applied perspective to represent the depth of some houses, the vanishing points are multiple so that living resonance comes to the narration. "Both these paintings display not only Chen's original viewpoint on the world but also his Western training as an architect and a Chinese sense of continuous movement in space." (Sullivan, 1989)

5.1.2 The Multiple and Equal Gaze of the Scroll

Though there is an edge physically on the scroll, there is no edge in the mind. Because as a spectator, you can choose to unroll it entirely or enter a scenario, to look at this scenario or that scenario. It does not set a static frame to the spectator and offers multi possibilities to gaze. In this way, the spectator can participate freely in the drawing. Despite the multi-focus, the parallel projection of scroll counts each focuses equally. That is because "the attempt to institute a single viewpoint contradicted the very roots of Chinese thought, in which man is not the measure of all things. Rather, according to the Taoist conception, it is nature that expresses itself through the artist." (Massimo, 2015)

Converted lines indicate centered hierarchy whereas parallel lines present equality, the contradiction is like that one between Rovira's and Cerdà's plans for the extension of Barcelona².

¹ Chen Chi-kwan (陈其宽, 1921–2007) was born in Beijing, growing up with trainings of Chinese traditional art. The war against the Japanese erupted when he was a youngster, and his family moved to Chongqing, Sichuan Province, where he studied architecture at Central University. In 1948, after the war, he continued his study in the United States. In 1951 Chen started working for Walter Gropius and faced the trend of Modernist architecture. He returned to settle in Taiwan in 1960, where he set up the Department of Architecture at Tunghai University. He collaborated with I.M. Pei to design the Luce Memorial Chapel on the university campus – a hallmark of mid-century modernist architecture, which was completed in 1963. In 2004, Chen was one of the recipients of Taiwan's prestigious National Award for Arts.

² On the expansion plan of Barcelona (1854-1860), controversial issues involved many different social groups. Cerdà's project with almost all streets straight and distributed in a regular geometrical grid aimed at avoiding privileged building zones. In contrast, the architect Antonio Rovira proposed to develop the extension in a concentric way in order to promote class separation. These two proposals

In city scrolls committed by the emperors, the situation becomes more political. In the dissertation *Curating an Egalitarian Territory: Axonometry and the Political Image of the City*, the scroll was regarded as political and social media. Due to the format of a scroll, it allows “only a single spectator to manipulate the painting’s movement” which “emphasized the fact that the reader - the Emperor – is a ‘master’ over the space” and the panoramic view shows the Emperors’ desire “to take a long view of the populace over which they ruled”. However, the author later argued that although “there is an established hierarchy between the viewer and the subject, the scope of the scrolls presents each part of the city with equal weighting, as the view is unselective and to scale. buildings are equally drawn, the people occupying the city spaces are by default also equally sized, regardless of their position within the city.” (Sayan, 2014, p.63)

The multi and equal gaze is a good way to understand how different groups of people interact with urban space and to discover the role space and design play in enabling or hindering social inclusion. As Kevin Lynch told us: “Moving elements in a city, and in particular the people and their activities, are as important as the stationary physical parts. We are not simply observers of this spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with the other participants.” (Lynch, 1960) For example, in Atelier Bow-Wow’s teaching work *Public Drawing* (Fig 5-5), 10 students spent two weeks on a 1.2x 3.6 meters drawing focusing on the area around the Harvard University campus. The drawing is done in pencil which made it modifiable, with a group so students can compete or debate as a “mimic the process of production of public spaces”. (Bow-Wow & K., 2017)



Fig 5-5. Students’ work of Atelier Bow-Wow. *Public Drawing* (Bow-Wow & K., 2017)

have shown the influences of power to the geometric forms of town planning. Cerdà’s plan aimed at an evenly foundation whereas Rovira’s plan focused on a hierarchical extension. Aibar, E., & Bijker, W. (1997). Constructing a City: The Cerdà Plan for the Extension of Barcelona. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 22(1), 3-30. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/689964>

A long scroll also implies the possibility to juxtapose matters of different contexts. The project *New Socialist Village* was selected to exhibit at the 2012 Venice Biennale for the British Pavilion to promote new ideas for UK architecture (Fig 5-6). A five meter-long scroll was adopted to depict the sceneries of both a present-day Chinese village and a future British entrepreneurial village. A city gate in the center of the scroll connects as well as separated two identical cities to speculate how the political planning system works for or against each other.



Fig 5-6. Darryl Chen. *New Socialist Village*. 2012. Source:
< <https://www.hawkinsbrown.com/news-and-events/news/new-socialist-village> >

“Some authors, and regrettably very many architects, will try to have you believe that their perspective is somehow right and superior to all others.” (Lawson, 2001, p. 4) But in a larger perspective, architects should turn to different values about architecture from the public they serve because architecture is a social object that mediates our relationships with each other.

5.1.3 Panoramic Mapping with Exceptional Details of Secular Life

Aimed to explore new models for the creation of contemporary urban culture, Beijing based architect Li Han and designer Hu Yan founded a creative platform integrating architecture, art, design, urban study, pop culture called Drawing Architecture Studio (DAS)³. Influenced by the methodology of Modernology⁴ and Japanese studio Atelier Bow-Wow's architectural consideration of both anterior planning posterior occupation⁵, the DAS' has been exploring the potential of architectural drawings on expressing complicated urban issues their sites are on Beijing's most original historic quarters. In an article *A Little Talk about Buildrawing* (Li, 2014), Li Han uses the discourse "buildrawing" to describe their works. They think normally architects just take renderings after digital models and overlooked a fact that drawing has the potential to be a constructed work itself. For them, drawing is not only an observation and documentation on the existing space, but also a vivid rendering of the secular life.

Li Han pointed out two advantages of buildrawing: One is to represent the complexity. By modeling easily any details in three-dimensional space, a complicated two-dimensional picture can be gradually produced. The other advantage is the facility to take snapshots from any viewpoints. Once the model is built, images could be taken from whichever angle of view. These two advantages of buildrawing formulated two kinds of representations in Drawing Architecture Studio's works. The complexity of drawings is applied to represent the complexity of urban life and the multiple viewpoints scenes are used to narrate graphic novels (Fig 5-7).

³ Introduction from: www.d-a-s.cn, Drawing Architecture Studio (绘造社)

⁴ Scholar of folklore and architecture Wajiro Kon, along with Kenkichi Yoshida and others, founded 'modernology'. Modernology is a concept contract to archaeology. Rather than focusing on architecture as material structure, its relationship to everyday life and customs of the people is reexamined from the standpoint of culture.

⁵ Influenced by the concept of modernology, Atelier Bow-Wow considered the posterior realm (people's occupation of space) as essential as the anterior space (planning of space). This vision is reflected by their illustrations in the publication *Graphic Anatomy Atelier Bow-wow*. Both construction details and people's behaviors are represented in sectional perspectives.

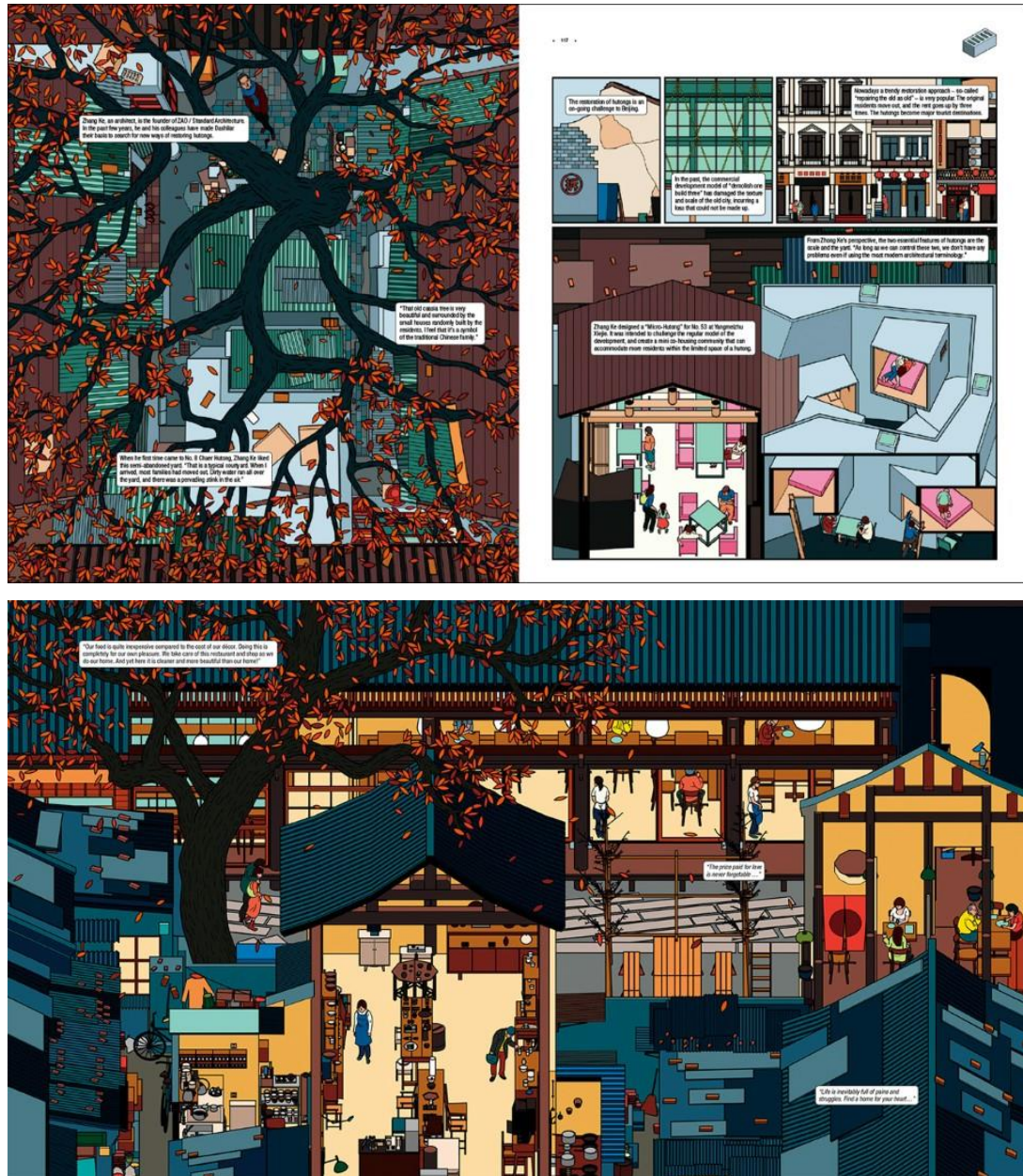


Fig 5-7. Li Han, Hu Yan. Graphic Novels of Dashilar. Source:
 < https://www.domusweb.it/en/news/2015/12/24/drawing_architecture_studio_dashilar.html>



Fig 5-8. Drawing Architecture Studio. Panoramic drawings of Beijing, *Tuan Jie Hu*. Source: < <http://www.d-a-s.cn/en/projectdetail.php?currcategory=drawing&page=1> >



Fig 5-9. Drawing Architecture Studio. *Dashila*. Source:
<<http://www.d-a-s.cn/en/projectdetail.php?currcategory=drawing&page=2>>

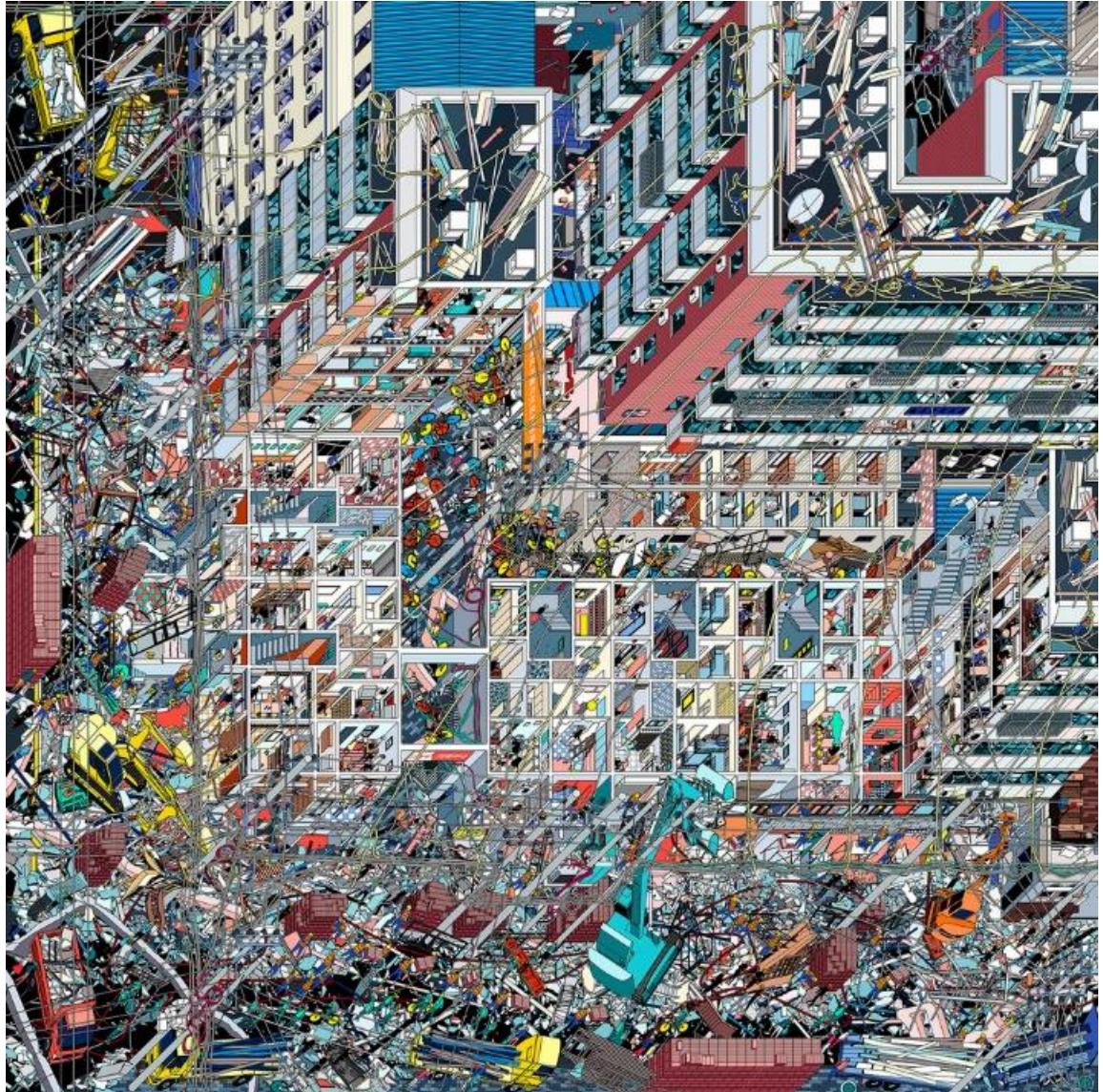


Fig 5-10. Drawing Architecture Studio. *The Samsara of Building No.42 on Dirty Street*⁶. Source:
< <http://www.d-a-s.cn/en/projectdetail.php?currcategory=drawing&page=6> >

⁶ The Overall Winner and Digital Category Winner of the 2018 WAF Architecture Drawing Prize

Looking at a DAS's panorama (Fig 5-8-Fig 5-10), it is hard not to amaze at its delicate details and extraordinary viewpoints. A great amount of graphical information has been condensed in the least pictorial space. Actually, these drawings are not drawn but built by three-dimensional modeling. They take advantage of architects' ability to construct, always build three-dimensional digital models before transformed them to two-dimensional and sophisticated drawings. Emotional feelings are added to the axonometric projections by multiple angled plans, elevations, sections in addition to flat coloring and rich figure details.



Fig 5-11. Drawing Architecture Studio. *Nan Luo Gu Xiang*. 2013. Source: 2013. *A Little Bit of Beijing*. Tongji University Press.



Fig 5-12. Drawing Architecture Studio. *Da Shilan*. 2015. *A Little Bit of Beijing*. Tongji University Press. Detail from Fig 5-10

As shown in the drawing of Beijing historical regeneration projects *Nan Luo Gu Xiang*⁷ (Fig 5-11) and *Dashila* (Fig 5-12), axonometric perspective is applied to facilitate an urban collage of maximum information. Roofs and facades of the buildings are uncovered to disclose the interior life as much as possible. Informal constructions, random electronic wires, and car parking are paid exaggeratedly attention because, in a city, informal and negligible matters are crucial posterior occupations, but are also the one always overlooked by us. DAS tries to “not only present the beautiful, poetic and diverse charm of the life but also encourage people to confront the difficulties and frustration. In this way, more and more forces might be attracted to pay attention to the issue of urban redevelopment”.

Notably, although represented with accurate lines and mechanical aesthetics, DAS’s drawings are not always faithfully record of the existing urban environment. For example, in the introduction of the work *Nan Luo Gu Xiang*, they pointed out: “Because the area is quite huge and some important venues scatter rather far from each other, the drawing assembles those important building in a smaller area and selects real background architecture to fill in space. In other words, this piece is created by disassemble Nan Luo

⁷ Nan Luo Gu Xiang is one of the oldest and best preserved hutong areas in Beijing. Its history goes back to Yuan Dynasty. Today Nan Luo Gu Xiang has become a famous tourist destination. The houses along the hutong have been converted to shops, restaurants, bars, and theatres.

Gu Xiang first and then reassemble it with a higher density... The color scheme takes reference from the rich colors of traditional Chinese painting and architectural decoration to create a delightful and prosperous atmosphere. (Li & Hu, 2013)”

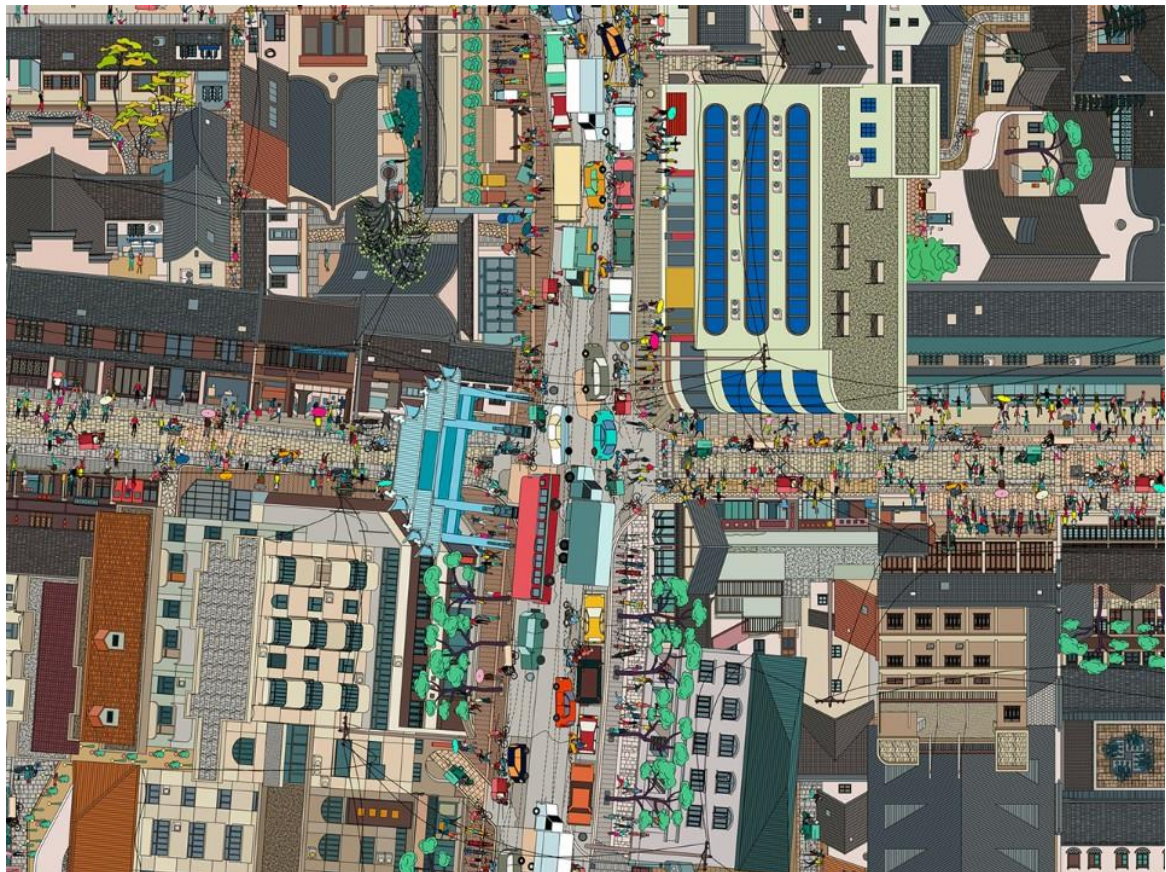


Fig 5-13. Drawing Architecture Studio and AMJ Architecture & Planning Design, *Old Town of Xinchang* , 2017. Source: < <http://www.d-a-s.cn/en/projectdetail.php?currcategory=drawing&page=3>>

Like in an ancient Chinese cityscape painting or map, sections and facades from different directions are set in in DAS's urban panoramas. It allows the viewers to constantly change their viewpoints and thus tensions result among different spatial systems of section, elevation and axonometric projection (Fig 5-13). The drawing techniques used by the Drawing Architecture Studio are not quite innovative, but their concerns on the contemporary urban issues are properly reflected by their way of representation. As an architect, writer and educator of Princeton University, Allen Stan stated:

Traditional representations presume stable objects. But the contemporary city is not reducible to an artifact. The city today is a place where visible and invisible streams of information, capital and subjects interact in complex formations. They form a dispersed field, a network of flows. In order to describe or to intervene in this new field, architects need representational techniques that engage time and change, shifting scales, mobile points of view and multiple programs. In order to map this complexity, some measure of control may have to be relinquished⁸.

Though digital visual tools are catering, DAS's mind is not fixed in the authoritative grids. Like the traditional Chinese conception of cartography, what was communicated by means of maps did not have to be numerical, measurable, or even directly perceivable. DAS believes cities have their own lives and inner operation logic and they need expression rather than design. The exceptionally detailed style is vividly narrating the variety and dynamicity of cities in a view from the daily life.

⁸ Written in the article "Mapping the Unmappable: On Natation", Allen Stan, 2000

5.2 Landscape Narration in the Large View of the Small

5.2.1 The Wandering Experience in Scrolls of Different Scales



a. Scroll painting in the scale of a country.

(Fig. 2-3)



b. Scroll painting in the scale of a city

(part of Fig. 2-12)



c. Scroll painting in the scale of a building

(part of Fig. 3-47)



d. Scroll painting in the scale of an interior

(Fig. 3-50)

Fig 5-14. Edit by the author. Four narrative scrolls in four scales: a country, a city, a building, and an interior. Paintings referenced from previous chapters

These four long scroll paintings are analyzed in detail in the previous chapters, but curiously, when put together, it is not difficult to find that each of them narrates a dwelling story in a particular dimension, they are: scale of a country, scale of a city, scale of a building, scale of an interior. Here the scale is not only about the accurate architectural size but about a meaningful and very human and social idea. As seen in the pictures (Fig 5-14), though architecture appeared in every scroll, neither of them intends to describe buildings mimetically. Buildings are no more than a medium for narration. In a national scale (Fig 5-14.a), buildings direct our visual stations from a mountain foot (closed-in reality) upwards to a higher place (opening-out metaphysic); bridges indicate the connection between one mountain to another. In an urban scale (Fig 5-14.b), buildings alone a lateral street open their gates to welcome our visits from a public life to an intimate one. In the scale of a

building (Fig 5-14.c), rather than represent the whole of it, only enclosures and yards are shown to emphasize the articulation in threshold spaces. Similarly, in an interior space (Fig 5-14.d), the floor and the ceiling are not as important as the furniture that organizes the narrative sequence. In a poetic narration, scale means the effect that paintings and buildings have on us in terms of relative rather than absolute size because objects do not actually change sizes as they move away from us. For this reason, whether in a further a closer view to see these objects, our viewpoints relate always to the patterns of narration.

This also happens in one painting of a large view. When we magnify a horizontal scroll of lateral sequence between mountains, it becomes a vertical one that narrates upwards sequence of one mountain. And when we zoom in again to look closer, we can even see human figures climbing to the upper temple following the paths. A bridge-like building narrates the wandering experience horizontally while the waterfall below it emphasized the narration vertically (Fig 5-15). A scroll painting is a panorama in the angle of totality, and any intention of framing it will lose essential information that only our mind can grasp by watching it in glance and gaze, back and forth. The large view of the small is not only about moving the focus of the eyes but also concerns the philosophical revelations of man's place in the world and man's relationships with nature. Taoist believed that all sizes were relative and different sizes are suited to their specific uses. From a broader perspective, we can grasp human's minuteness with nature's vastness. Upon a closer observation, man still has his place to dwell. However, though shifting in changeable scales, the ordering system of narrative articulation is always underlined. In this angle of totality, distant nature and detailed artifact can be harmoniously united to a synthesis.

Fig 5-15. Glance and gaze of the painting *Autumn Colors on Rivers and Mountains* (Fig 2-3)



In artist Chen Chi-kwan's scrolls, he often combines temporal imagery of sun and moon, dawn and dusk. It is actually not possible in the physical world, because when the sun is visible, the moon must be invisible. Probably because the artist wants us to read the scroll in a traditional way, by unrolling it, we can experience the transmutation from the sun to the moon, and the change of time from day to night. In another interpretation, that represented a philosophic Chinese belief- that the sun and the moon are in complementary bi-polar relationships rather than direct opposites. Similarly, buildings are never seen as individual elements but a series of spatial articulations between inside and outside, artificial and natural, building and city in different scales.

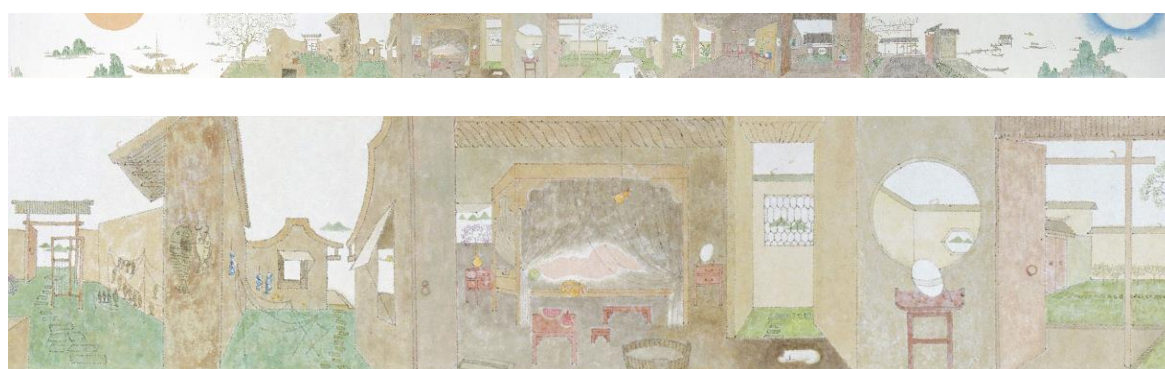


Fig 5-16. Chen Chi-kwan. *Yin yang 2*. 1985. 546 x 30 cm. ink and color on paper. Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

In his representative work *Yin yang 2* (Fig 5-16), Chen discussed the traditional Chinese ideology of balanced oppositions yin and yang⁹. Not only sun and moon are juxtaposed symmetrically, elements of different scales: ocean-like lakes, fishing villages, gardens, yards, and intimate bedrooms are all organized in one scroll in a zig-zag sequence. Chen said in an interview¹⁰ that “The buildings in the picture transform the sense of space. Many things can be expanded from here, not only are elevation views presented, but section views are also offered. Since it is very torturous inside, it will stimulate the imagination.”

9 “Ying and yang” philosophy is based on an opposing yet complementary theory developed from the dualism of yin(negative) and yang(positive). In the Confucian classic, the Book of Changes, it deals with the process of change in all things. In Taoism ideology, all things are believed to stand in contradiction to each other but still are mutually dependent. The effect produced by the contradictory aspects were greater than any that could be achieved singularly. The dualism of yin-yang is expressed by Chinese aesthetics of calligraphy, painting, poetry and gardens.

¹⁰ Chen Chi-Kwan, Architect & Artist: <<https://vimeo.com/18132704>>



As an architect, Chen has used a section-like view to present *Ying Yang 2* to suggest the building's mysterious articulation, whereas in his scrolls *Interpenetration* and *Antipole* (Fig 5-17, Fig 5-18), the section-view is changed to layout-views. In *Interpenetration* (Fig 5-17), we first see an interior central hall with some furniture; while from the center, our viewpoints are scattered gradually to both ends of the scroll where layers of enclosures direct our imagination to the distant universe. When Chen Chi-kwan sets architectural elements to formulate his pictorial space, the mind's eye is never absent. Though he simplified the techniques of Chinese paintings and integrated with a western perspectival view, his paintings are still beyond realistic representation, which let us realize a poetic potential to draw architecture. The key lies in the essential concerns of spatial narrations between inside and outside, between a very closed-in dwelling and a far-distanced universe. By the narration of the spatial articulation in changeable scales, man's place is mentally relevant to the natural world in microcosm. This is just what ancient Chinese scholars realized when they express the nature of Nature with landscape paintings and garden-making.

Fig 5-17. Chen Chi-kwan. *Interpenetration*. 1993. 186x31cm (left)

Fig 5-18. Chen Chi-kwan. *Antipole*. 1992. 186x32cm (right)

5.2.2 The Large View of the Small in Wang Shu's Drawings

The cosmic vision of man's harmonious existence in a vast but orderly universe has become a cosmic diagram of landscape paintings as well as the realization of gardens. Though sometimes in very limited spaces, traditional Chinese gardens were meant to evoke a feeling of being in the larger world of nature. With their essence concentrated like in landscape paintings, even a single rock may represent a complete range of mountains and small ponds represent mighty rivers and oceans. However, the gardens are never accurate miniaturizations of nature. Rather than faithfully copying a real mountain's appearance and form, Chinese gardens advocate design methods that intent to convey similar wandering and dwelling experiences in nature. This ordering system based on natural principles also underlines in traditional landscape paintings. Gardens and paintings together established the Chinese conception of the landscape – a human and cultural narration of larger world of nature.

This awareness of “large view of the small” in garden-making and landscape painting is adopted by architect Wang Shu into his architectural works. Like a traditional Chinese literati man, he declared that “to construct a house is to construct a world” and “every design of mine is a garden”. For Wang Shu, all his design thinking is based on a traditional worldview reflected by the landscape. For example, in the landscape painting titled *Rongxi Zhai Studio* (a studio in the capable size of a knee, Fig 3-15), Wang Shu realized that “if I could live in a world like the painting, I would rather minify my house as small as my knee. (Wang, 2016)” It is a Taoist attitude towards artificial constructions in nature. He also resembled this painting to the image of a Chinese garden – the painting frame as a closed wall, the water as a pool, similar trees and stones in front of a pavilion. A garden for Wang Shu is more than a garden, a basic methodology of architecture, which he called “a kind of geometry and narrative of the natural form”. The geometry for Wang Shu is not a Euclid one, but a narrative one of natural and artificial forms originated from traditional houses and gardens. This narration is not easy to tell but implied in his drawings and writings. Wang Shu's original sketching of his projects from 2003 to 2011 are printed with 1:1 scale on A4 and A3 papers in the book *Wang Shu: Imagining the house* (Wang, 2012). Through the architects' drawings, we can examine his basic ideas and revises on his design process and understand his schemes behind the appearance of projects.

The first page of the book is a calligraphic work instead of an architectural work of Wang Shu (Fig 5-19). He keeps practicing calligraphy year-around and drawing with a pencil because he considers drawing as significant as practicing Chinese calligraphy, both as ways of being closer to nature. Wang pointed out the inspirations brought by both tools to his design:

“the writing of every character is like constructing a living place or part of a garden...my sketches represent a large-scale landscape site and partial details simultaneously, probing into a way of constructing the world that offers abundant diversity – the kind of diversity that is related especially with freehand drawing and handcraftsmanship”

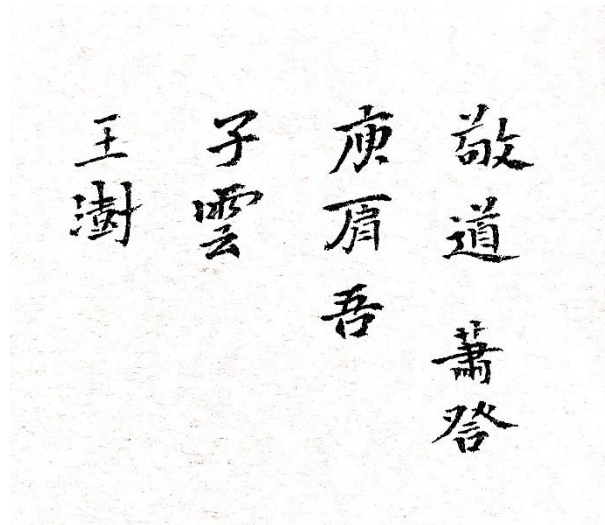


Fig 5-19. Wang Shu. Copy of Calligraphic work from Zhong You (A 2nd century calligraphy master). Wang Shu has practiced copying this work for over ten years because this work is considered to be closest to nature. (Wang, 2012)

To Wang Shu, designing is like writing that traces the multiple possibilities of a living situation with several words. Actually, Wang Shu’s design languages, the “juxtaposition of scales” and “abundant diversity” are not his own invention, but a fundamental pattern of thought fostered a cultural coherence in China over a period of three millennia. Art Scholar Ledderose examined the whole Chinese history of art and finally addressed its definition by an issue called the “module system” which is originated from the Chinese script. In *Ten Thousand Things*, he argued that “Script was the most powerful instrument to foster cultural coherence in China because it records the meanings of words rather than their ever-changing pronunciation. Thousands of distinct characters were only possible with a module system” and “Its fifty thousand characters are all composed by choosing and combining a few modules taken from a relatively small repertoire of some two hundred parts” (Ledderose, 1998)

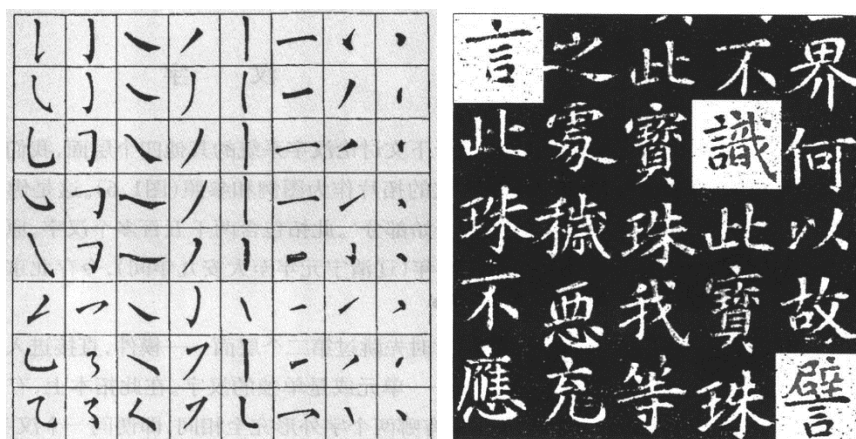


Fig 5-20. Table of sixty-four stroke types from the calligraphy of Liu Gongquan. 778-865 (Ledderose, 1998, p. 10)

Fig 5-21. Examples of the module indicating “word (yan 言)”, from *Lotus Hand Sutra*. A.D. 1055-1093. (Ledderose, 1998, p. 17)

Each character (unit level) is built up of single strokes (element level) (Fig 5-20), and between these two levels is the module level. Ledderose (1998) defines “Modules” as “components” or “interchangeable building blocks” that “can be put together in varying combinations to make the written characters that have been and still are used today in China”. Module system keeps creativity in large quantities. As a creative mode of thinking rather than a technique, modules can be found in literature, philosophy, and social organizations, as well as in arts and architecture. For example, in a landscape painting or a garden, pavilions, mountains, and trees of various forms are assembled to similar secluded patterns. In a cityscape painting, bays are assembled into buildings, buildings are assembled into courtyards, and courtyards are assembled into cities, modules are assembled to units that grow in proportion to bigger scales (Fig 5-14). The organic relation between them comes from observing the “nature of Nature” rather than the representation of Nature since it is an issue to create something new of variations and mutations rather than that of mimesis. The devising of module system concerns a fundamental and creative pattern of thought that shared by fields of poetry, calligraphy, painting and as well as architecture.

In the article *A Gaze and a Glance*, architectural theorist and critic Jin Qiuye interpreted Wang Shu’s design methodology “Similar type, different forms” by relating it to the module system. Comparing to landscape paintings, he divided Wang Shu’s module system into three levels: stroke level (experiments on tectonic constructions); motif level (modules like five scattered houses, Taihu house and Tile house); and composition level (organization of modules in changeable scales). “Wang Shu’s design language connects all levels from strokes to scripts coherently to a quite powerful and rich narrative poem. (Jin & Wang, 2014)”

For Wang Shu, each project is like composing a calligraphic writing with his module vocabularies. His knowledge of Chinese painting and calligraphy genetically transformed into his language of architecture. The following texts will read Wang Shu's drawings for the projects Tengtou Pavilion and Xiang Shan Campus Phase II, in two relative scales, trying to find his methodology of design when treating architecture as a language about the relative scale that also underlined in fields of traditional poetry, painting, and calligraphy.

In a relatively small scale, Wang Shu introduced a series of house types. For him, the house is the initial prototype of all kinds of architecture because it maintains a sort of poetic life. For example, in his project "five scattered houses", houses are named like "one wave and three twists gallery", "lotus leaf in the wind", "twisting and undulating" and "teahouse". Images from nature like a wave, lotus leaf, hill, and Taihu Lake have become his basic words to build house modules. And these house types appear again and again in his later projects.

Each archetype is not invented, but from Wang Shu's memories on observing and pondering Chinese gardens and landscape paintings, as well as on the law of nature. For example, in the landscape painting *The Picture of Wuxie Mountain*, Wang Shu has seen "A path twisted its way deep into a hollow space formed by trees, which also implied the depth of thoughts" and "the strong lines in the vague woods, half natural and half artificial". (Wang, 2012) His vision of an ever-deeper space without hierarchical difference directly resulting in an archetype idea. The red frames(Fig 5-22) Wang diagrammed in the *Picture of Wuxie Mountain* share the same schema appeared in Ming dynasty novel illustrious (Fig3-46). Often called "isometric perspective", the "frontal obliqueness" scheme in terms of architecture is an approach that cuts a building twice, once on the frontal face, it indicates a rich inner world, and another time it obliquely directs the viewpoint from where we are to a world thousands of miles away.

This isometric section becomes his project "Tengtou Pavilion". Like a "stone cave" in the garden where scholars meditate in, the "tree cave" in painting inspired Wang Shu to propose a series of irregularly shaped wall openings that define diverse entrances. He started with eleven section drawings to devise the rich inner possibilities against taking the form of building as a priority. Tree segments of 3.3m-width established the depth of each section drawing. As a result, the isometric view is a combination of diverse sections and layouts. Layers of wall openings direct visitors to pass through rhythmically section by section and elevated walkways guide them to a green-shade level on the roof made of trees, just like what we have experienced in a Chinese garden or a landscape painting (Fig 5-22).

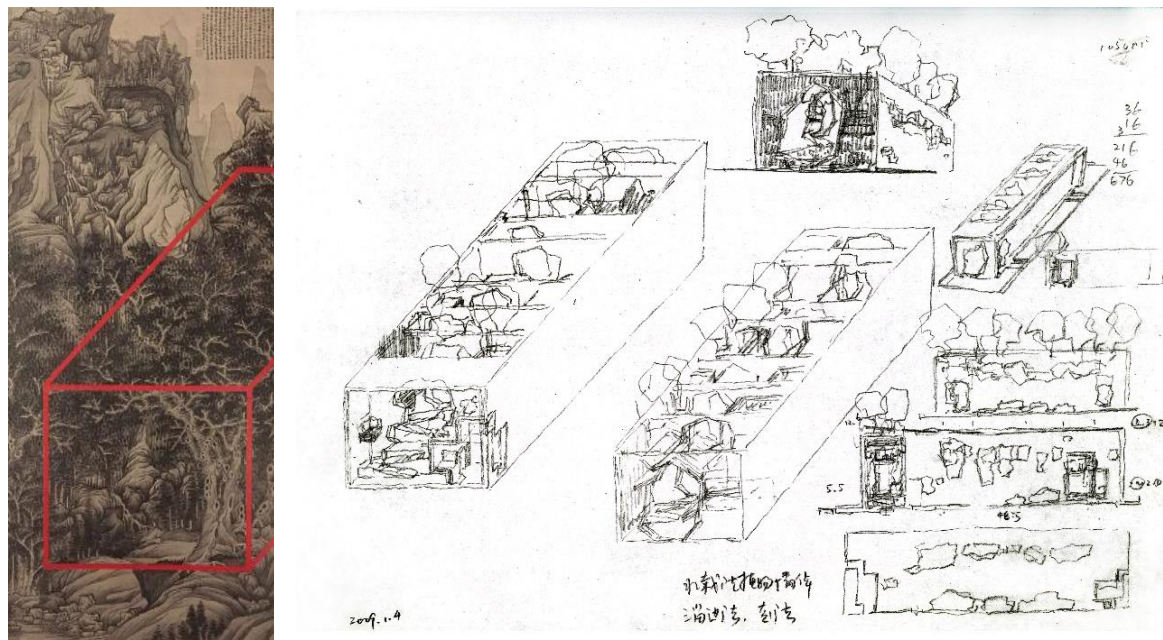


Fig 5-22. Wang Shu's drawing for Tengtou Pavilion and his reference: Chen Hongshou's *The Picture of Wuxie Mountain*. Ming dynasty. In this painting, we can see a scholar meditating in a cave built up with trees, and taller mountains above the trees that indicate a far-away spiritual world. (Wang, 2016) and (Wang, 2012)

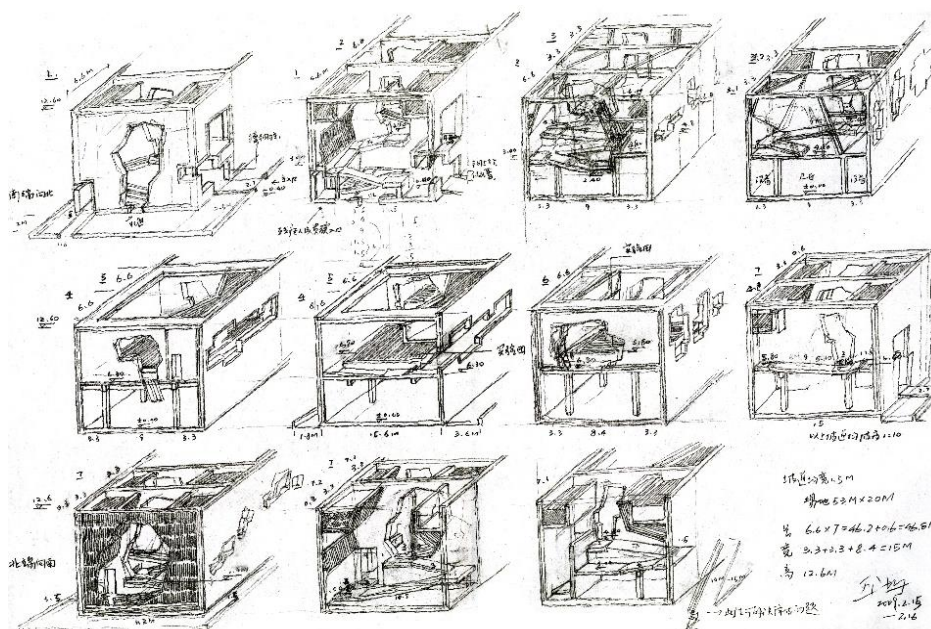


Fig 5-23. Wang Shu. Drawings of the project Tengtou Pavilion. 2009. Pencil on A3 Paper. Wang Shu designed the building with a series of isometric drawings that had sections after he reviewed the experience of every segment with visual height like in Chinese paintings. (Wang, 2012)

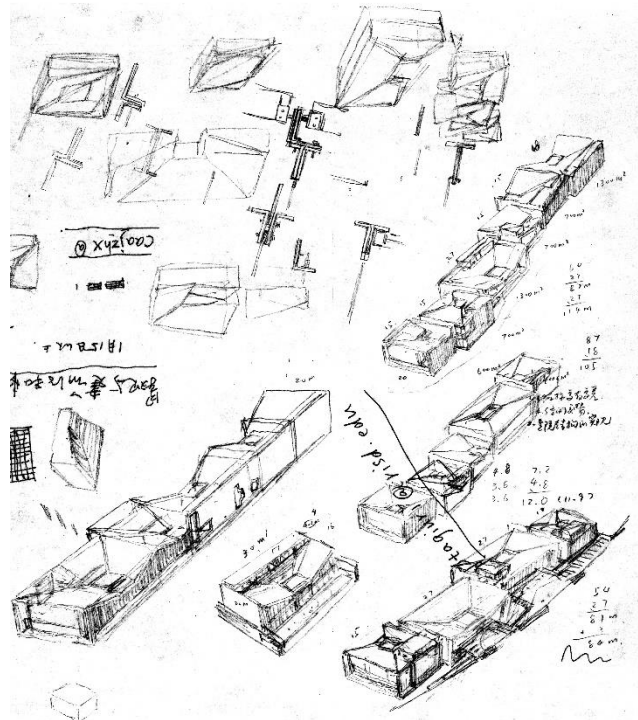


Fig 5-24. Wang Shu. Sketches of Tile Mountain project. 2006. Pencil on A3 Paper. Different possibilities to connect the cut courtyards. (Wang, 2012).

In the project of Tile Mountain Guest House¹¹, He also began the proposal with isometric section drawings. This time, he made an experiment with another archetype called “combined courtyard-houses”, courtyard buildings are cut and sectioned into a series of transformations. The sketches have shown Wang’s considerations on different possibilities to connect the cut courtyards (Fig 5-24). In the article *The Field of Vision on Section*, Wang Shu argued the importance of seeing the inner part of things since sections enable the essence of life to be visible. Wang Shu said that “when the vision changes, the way to draw changes accordingly. In my point of view, the seemingly unthinking layouts, elevations and sections, and their drawing sequences are substantially deciding if we are thinking about architecture or not. (Wang, 2016)” Wang’s vision of inner sections logically influenced his way of drawing and even the appearance of the project (Fig 5-25). In the photograph, we can see how similar to a section the façade looks like.

¹¹ This project (5000 square meters) is a new reception center for the Xiang Shan campus including dorms for visiting scholars. It is located at the southern foot of Xiang Shan Hill, along the river on a long and narrow site where six village houses located originally. Wang Shu’s initial idea was to build six new village houses to replace the former six.



Fig 5-25. Iwan Bann. Bird-view Photography of the Wa Shan Guesthouse in Hangzhou. 2013. Source: <<https://iwan.com/portfolio/wa-shan-guesthouse-hangzhou-china/>>



Fig 5-26. Wang Shu. Collage of Tengtou pavilions based on *The Picture of Shan Zhuang* (山庄图). Source: (Wang, 2010)

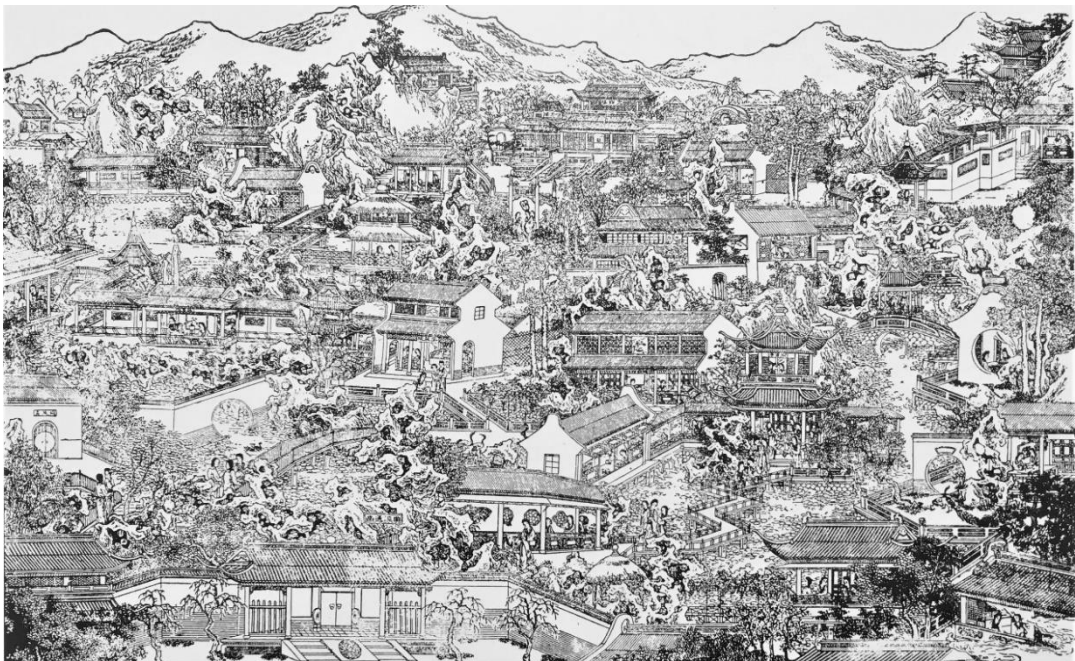


Fig 5-27. Overall drawing of the Garden of Total Vision. Illustration from *Zeng Ping Bu Tu Shitou Ji* (增评补图石头记). Shanghai Library Collection. 1930.

Wang Shu's Tile Mountain proposal probably was devised from the collage he made with Tengtou pavilion (Fig 5-26). As seen in the collage work, diverse forms of Tengtou Pavilions are connected to a panorama and in Tile Mountain, one Tengtou pavilion also appeared on one side of the building (Fig 5-29). In the background of the collage, two parts taken from the same scroll of *The Picture of Shan Zhuang*, one in 1:1000 scale and another in 1:1 scale (by the sizes of the human figures and trees) are juxtaposed because for Wang Shu, two scales are actually narrating a similar world built up with stones and trees. The Tile Mountain guesthouse is narrating a similar wandering and dwelling experience of the real mountain Xiang on the background, though one is built up with artificial materials, and another with natural stones and trees. Traditionally, a Chinese garden is not planted but built with an extraordinary number of buildings and rockeries. As seen in this drawing of "the Garden of Total Vision", an imaginary reconstruction of the garden in the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*, a startling number and variety of buildings are jumbled in among rocks and water (Fig 5-27). Such an inaccurate narration expressed in a garden is correlated to a literary pursuit of meaning in a Chinese landscape painting. "In the overall system of Chinese art, gardens may thus be understood as being designed to resemble paintings, whereas paintings are made to evoke the disposition of gardens. This reciprocal relationship highlights the discursive nature of Chinese conception of space. (Li & Yeo, 2007)" In Wang Shu's imagination, one Tengtou house-type is representative of a rich sort of life conceived by its narrative depth. Several Tengtou houses of different types together could formulate a village in the narrative length.



Fig 5-28. Xie Shichen. *The Imitation of Huang Shan Qiao Landscape Painting*

Wang Shu related the narration of this Tile Mountain project to a Song dynasty painting called *The Imitation of Huang Shan Qiao Landscape Painting*. In this painting, bridges, narrow routes and houses inside mountains are gradually guiding our walkways from the bottom of the mountain to a cave for meditation inside the mountain and finally elevated to a spiritual realm of Heterotopia thousands of miles away (Fig 5-28). Wang Shu makes a metaphor of his buildings to mountains because in ancient Chinese perception of nature, mountains were perceived as living entities, the embodiment of the natural order. Mountain is also a spiritual refuge where moral values can be cultivated, an ancient utopia free of warfare and social turmoil. Mountains in paintings are closely related with human's ideal places, Wang Shu's imitation of the mountain or the landscape painting is not only about the appearances. In his buildings, the mountain also means a reclusion from the unsatisfied urban reality and somewhere to start a spiritual self-cultivation. He explained that to watch a Chinese landscape painting is a special experience and atmosphere referred to the human perception, not only how we "look into the mountain", also how we "look from the internal mountain to the outside". This experience is a narrative process in which the role is changing from the author (architect) to the users, and also an in-between experience concerning architecture and environment. In Wang's description of the project, he said: "From there (the entrance), three paths would separate off. One could enter the building from the ground floor, the second floor, or the rooftop. People would be invited to experience a sequence of surprising feelings in various segments and finally enter into a very quiet bedroom with an atmosphere of meditation." The experience of three paths is developed by several scroll-like isometric views. Through the change between Fig 5-29 and Fig 5-30, we can see four building prototypes under a timber roof of over 100 meters. Except for the consideration of the long rainy season, the roof also provides a possibility to wander beyond various sorts of life in a larger perspective, just like what we can experience in the real Xiang mountain of the background or in the river of the foreground.

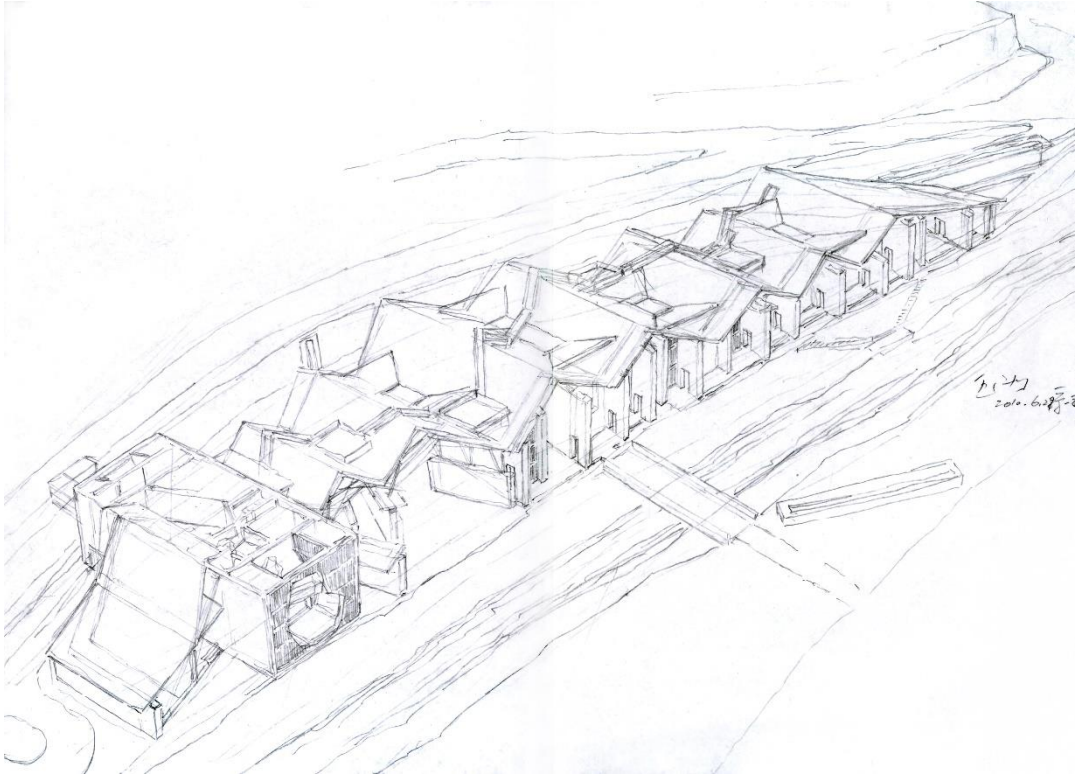


Fig 5-29. Wang Shu. Drawing for the project Wa Shan Guest House. Pencil on A3 Paper. (Wang, 2012).

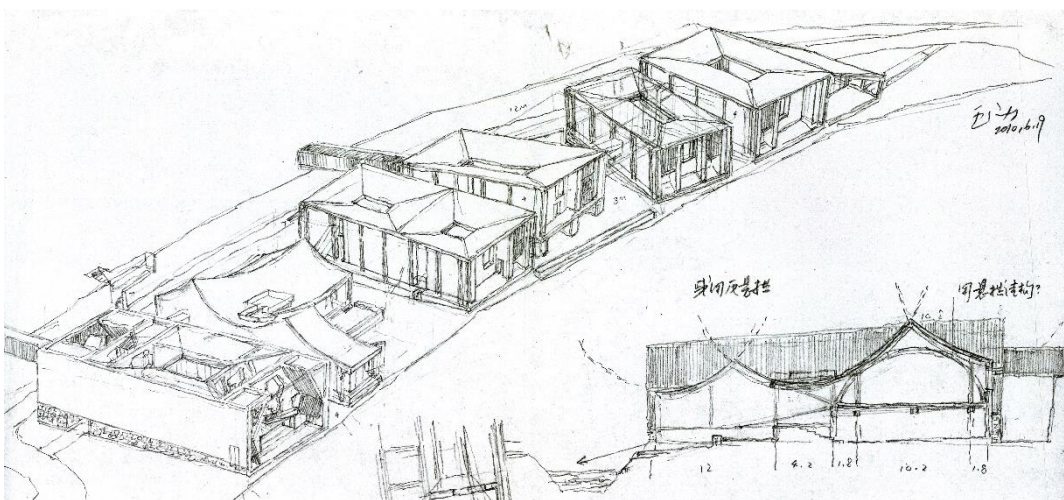


Fig 5-30. Wang Shu. Drawing for the project Wa Shan Guest House. Pencil on A3 Paper. (Ibid.).

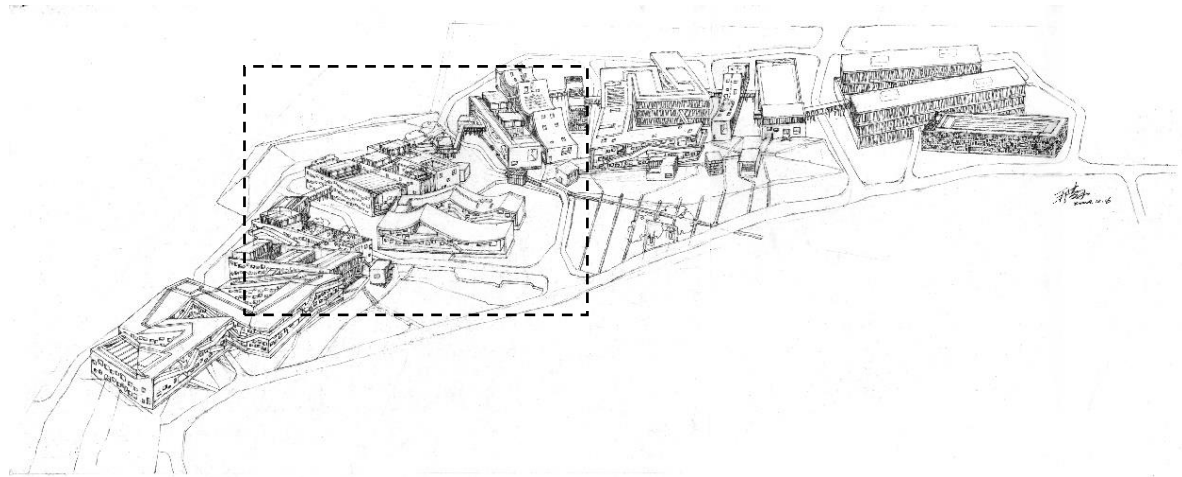


Fig 5-31. Wang Shu. Drawing of Xiang Shan Campus Phase II (Ibid.) Pencil on A3 Paper.

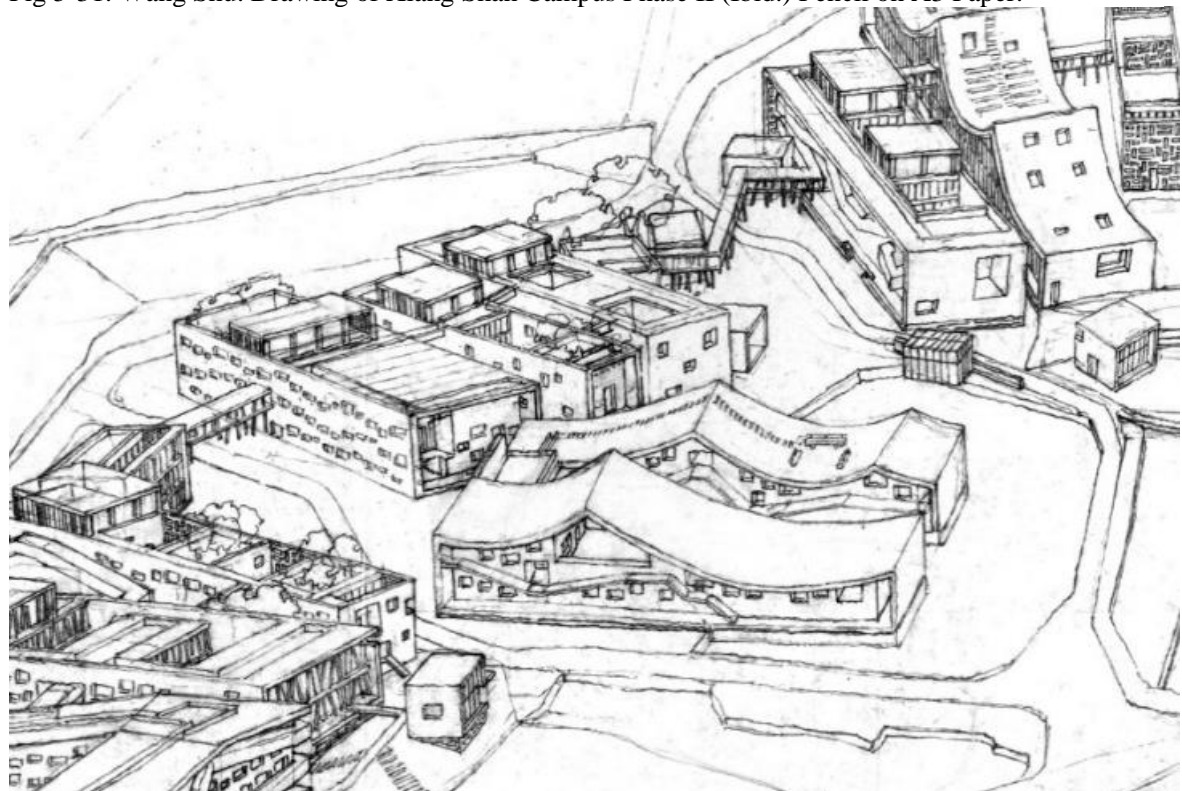


Fig 5-32. Wang Shu. Details of the Xiang Shan Campus Phase II (Ibid.)

If Tile Mountain guest house is a small mountain, where it is located – the Xiang Shan Campus is a grand mountain. The design is depicted using large scale sketches again, Along the river, the building changed continuously for 150 meters. It was very clear how the three paths penetrated through the building along this length. If the Tile Mountain project is a small mountain, where it is located – the Xiang Shan Campus Phase II¹², is a grand mountain. Due to the large-scale site, Wang introduced more archetypes to keep the correct scale rather than enlarge the size of each type. As seen in the drawing of it (Fig 5-32), archetypes like Huge-hill-house type and Taihu-house type also appeared. Four archetypes composed twelve different buildings in relatively small scale in Wang Shu's encyclopedic script of the diverse world (Fig 5-31).

Wang said that many photographers find it difficult to take photos of his buildings because the instant camera is good at a single building but not the narrative experience. Like Tile Mountain, the Xiang Shan Campus is also a series of stimulating experience which can be understood only when one walks through it. Flying gallery and steps on the facades conformed a system that connects different segments together, encouraging outdoor learning, informal gathering and discussion. Each segment has its relative meaning in the traditional teaching activity which is always held in the countryside where penetration with nature is an essential part of education. For the China Academy of art, Wang Shu is making a garden-like landscape system instead of a building. He has drawn three double-A3 drawings to examine the group relationships of various building types again and again. He believes Taoist thinker Zhuang Zi (庄子 370-287 BCE)'s saying "What cannot be achieved with the brain might be achieved by the actions of man's hand".

Like viewing a handscroll, Wang Shu works on a building-type-scale and a general-scale drawing at the same time, back and forth. He said on the notes of the project Xiang Shan campus:

When doing research on the subdivided types, I was thinking through the organization and control of the large scale. I often thought about these two topics simultaneously. After those seeming fragments of work, I stopped drawing for several days but drew in my mind, or even felt like I was drawing with my body. One afternoon, after I had drunk tea, written Chinese calligraphy, and calmed a piece of paper and drew from left to right without stop for about four hours. The process couldn't be halted. (Wang, 2012)

The glance and gaze view of Chinese painting become the simultaneous consideration of big and small scales in Wang Shu's design process. His thinking of scale is a philosophic one based on the ideologies of large view of the small. A far distant view and a closed view

¹² Xiang Shan Campus is part of the new expansion of the China Academy of Fine Arts. The site surrounds a 50-meter hill named "Xiang". Phase II started on the southern side of the hill in 2004 and finished in 2007 with building areas of 85,000 m².

are combined in the same drawing to control the feelings of different distances simultaneously. He treats all existing things equally with no hierarchical differences and measures elements of all scales with plain drawings and the “inner ruler of the mind” to prevent “over-showy spaces and the loss of scale that usually result from computer design”.

5.2.3 The Artificial Creation of a Microcosm

In the interview “How big a house someone may need?”, Wang Shu pointed out that “Through disciplines of traditional Chinese architecture, garden and painting (especially landscape painting), one of the commonly discussed issues is the scale”. Indeed, the large view of the small is an awareness rather than a technique, a narrative of scale rather than the measurement of scale.

Chinese gardening is always conceived as “rhythmic irregularity” comparing to Western gardening based on regular geometrical principles. However, except for the irregular forms and Picturesque character, Chinese gardening also advocates the “large view of the small”. And whether in painting or in the garden, this notion has always been valued as something prior to the forms and sensations of gardens. As said by Qing dynasty poet and painter Shen Fu in his autobiography *Six Chapters from a Floating Life*¹³:

One should try to show the small in the big and the big in the small, and provide for the real in the unreal and for the unreal in the real. One reveals and conceals alternately, making it sometimes apparent and sometimes hidden. This is not just rhythmic irregularity, nor does it depend on having a wide space and great expenditure of labor and material.

“To show the small in the big, and the big in the small (小中见大，大中见小)” was later elaborated by the pioneer researcher of Chinese garden Tong Jun as a classical description to design and appreciate Chinese gardening. When transformed to architectural design, Wang Shu understands it as the mind’s measuring of relative scales from the way of seeing. “Instead of the absolute size of objects, it is the narration of big and small, story between size and size, a dialectical relation.” He argued that to show the small in big, contrary to powerful and rich monumentality, we need to care about the embodied experience of human scale and cultural significance. (Wang, 2016)

Researcher Stein (1990) believes that in China the macrocosm is reproduced in many microcosms presented by certain enclosed spaces like container gardens, caves, houses, and towns. By ancient metaphors, customs, and practices, the macro-microcosm has remained

¹³ *Six Chapters from a Floating Life*(浮生六记) is an autobiography written by poet and painter Shen Fu (沈复, 1763-1825). This book is a record of his life spent almost entirely in cultivated poverty, in which it was considered far more valuable to have a pot of chrysanthemums on the table than meat for dinner. The text is cited from the chapter 2 of this book “The Little Pleasures of Life” which vividly described the leisure time activities of the author, like his joys of cultivating flowers and composing poems. The enjoyment of gardens plays a great part in bringing delight to his tragic life. The original text is 若夫园亭楼阁，套室回廊，叠石成山，栽花取势，又在大中见小，小中见大，虚中有实，实中有虚，或藏或露，或浅或深。不仅在“周回曲折”四字，又不在地广石多徒烦工费。(Shen, 1999).

alive until modern times both in China and in the countries influenced by its civilization. For example, Li Yu called his own garden a Mustard Seed because in Buddhist belief, the entire universe hides in a single seed. He also talks of the single stones placed on the table somewhere to start a stroll with the Immortals and a mythic world to hide. For cultivated people, a miniature garden plays an important role to escape from this world and penetrate the hidden place of supreme artifice. One had to make himself very small (in many stories he is said to be the size of a thumb) in order to go through the tiny gateway. Its smallness is sometimes a makeshift resulting from lack of space, but it gives greater value to the object. Landscape in a container or in a garden becomes a mythical space, concentrating the universe, holding specimens of all the typical things of the universe. When the whole things are reduced in size, they become manageable and accessible to handling.

In the year 1997, Wang Shu accomplished a gardening design in his own residence of fifty square meters. He said: “this house is small, but it is enough for stuffing into eight buildings, then how small is it?” (Wang, 2016) The eight buildings, called “eight unlivable houses” actually refer to the eight lamps he made for the interior design and each lamp is constructed in a particular manner of constructing a house. In this so-called garden, there is no plants and flowers. Instead, Wang Shu inserted five rooms and furniture as imaginative alternation. Not only lamps are named houses, but furniture like a desk is also called a building in the bird-view and a chair is called a building to sit on because they are made with the same skills to construct buildings. In the Chinese traditional conception of dwelling, the function of the room is never limited by the furniture since a bed may be equivalent to a room (Fig 3-64). Similar to gardening, Wang Shu emphasized that the process of design is like to play a game, and his toys are the diverse rooms in unreal scales imagined by him.

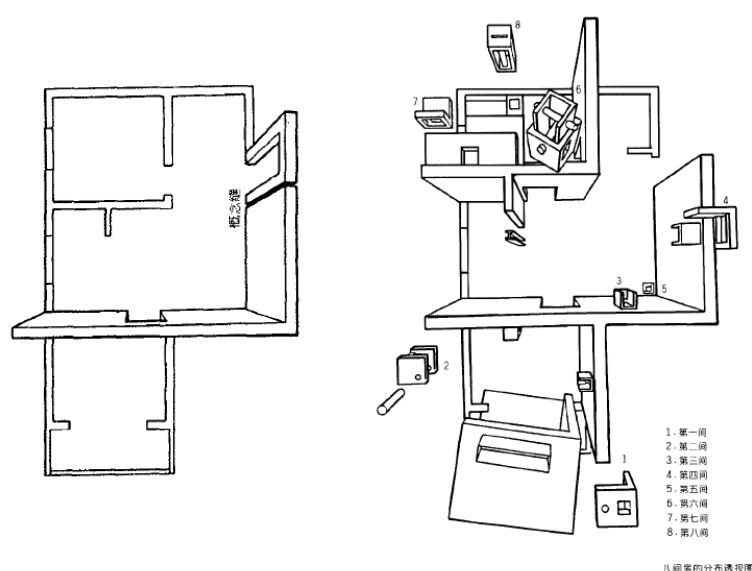


Fig 5-33. Wang Shu's interior design for his own residence and eight unlivable houses. 1997. Hang Zhou, China (Wang, 2002)

The spirit of play is a cultural pattern of a Chinese garden, as Tong Jun said: “The Chinese garden is primarily not a single wide-open space, but is divided by corridors and walls into courts in which buildings...attract one’s attention. Garden architecture in China is so delightfully informal and playful that even without flowers and trees it would still make a garden.” (Tong, 1997) By creating an infinite number of different experiences in a small space, though a garden seems so remarkably artificial, yet to the Chinese are still natural. Partly because it may “recall through allusion and traditions, the simple retreats of great poets and scholars”, and also because “their visual conventions, developed first by landscape painters, were seen as distillations of natural forms” (Keswick, 1980).

In a reduced scale, gardens can be manageable. In the creation of a microcosm, the energy, the qi of the cosmos can be encapsulated. This correlative cosmological thought that signifies the macrocosm within the microcosm and reflects the human realm in the schema of cosmos, is what all Chinese arts aspire to. In the late Ming dynasty, the large view of the small concerns a traditional humanistic spirit when Chinese literate elites appreciated manufactured things of the material world. For example, the book *Treatise on Superfluous things*(长物志) described the choice of paintings, the gardens, the decorative objects, and the tools for literary activity such as brushes, brush holders, paper, inkwell, incense burner, and the like that reflected a learned man’s aesthetics of daily life. These prescriptions look like a dictatorial manifestation of a way of life dominated by a concern for elegance or refinement. The artifacts of the Chinese literati elites, similar to gardening and painting, used to be part of their aesthetics of daily life. As another agent of design thoughts, these superfluous things reflected their intellectual world by the appearance of everyday uses.

Like a traditional Chinese literate elite of late Ming dynasty, professor of China Academy of Art, Wang Xin’s also collect antiques of everyday use such as inkstones, brush holders and sculptured bricks. He believes it is possible to build a garden, in Tong Jun’s word “even without flowers trees”, in case we apply the same laws of nature in the creation of artifacts. Whether in a handleable object, a garden, or a building, Wang Xin applied this ideology of signifying macrocosm within microcosm to his experimental teaching at China Academy of art.

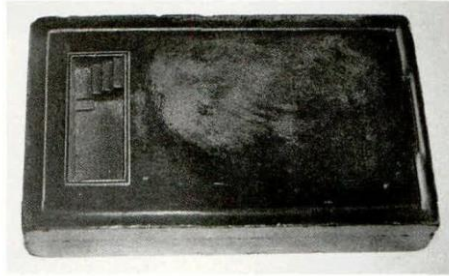


Fig 5-34. (Left) An inkstone from Wang Xin's collection. The water containing part resembles a small pool with several steps to get inside to a mysterious world under the water. (Wang, 2015)



Fig 5-35. (Right) A brush holder from Wang Xin's collection. Although the interior space is the useful part of the object, the surface is sculptured as a narrative model of garden gathering. (Ibid.)

The arrangement of gardens in containers was also called an “in the teapot model” that from small scenes you can envision larger scenes by visual perceptions and bodily experiences. Shrinking himself in the mind's eye, a man could then imagine that he was among those mysterious places (Fig 5-34, Fig 5-35) In an architect's perspective, Wang Xin has investigated these antiques he collected and proposed a second-year course “Artefacts Space” at China Academy of Art.

In the modern version design of *Bowl Mountain*, a mountain is materialized to a small construction in the bowl of daily use. A part of this object is for putting chopsticks, and the part aside is for sauces as this bowl is used for eating noodles. As the soups drunk up by the user, an underground world will appear. Obviously, the steps on this construction are for a man to go downstairs to that imaginary world. With the user's participation and imagination, a subtle relation between water and mountain is represented by the interaction between the soup and the container. We could sense the corresponded space and time even in one small bowl for noodle (Fig 5-36).

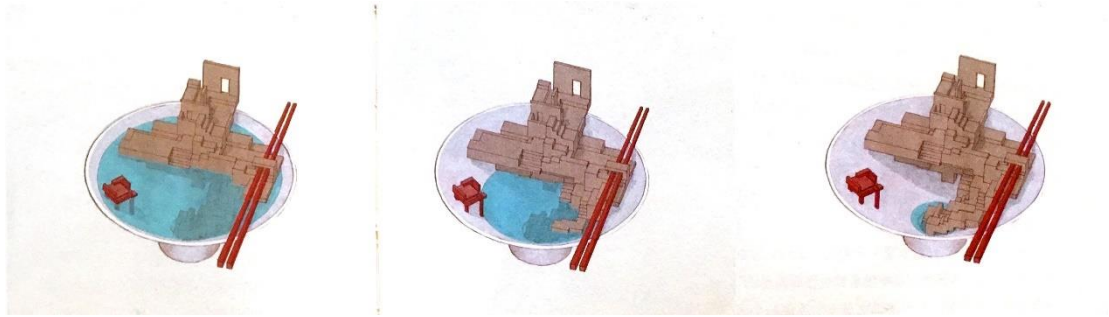


Fig 5-36. Drawing *Bowl Mountain* by professor Wang Xin, from China Academy of Art (Jin & Wang, 2017)

The artificial creation of a microcosm, rather than an operational method, is a way of seeing. Something considered of great size is quite small when seen from a broader perspective and what is considered a minute object will be found to be rich in content and form upon closer observation. The poetics underlined in the notion large view of the small requires evocation and imagination. It concerns the imaginary dimension when comparing one thing with another. It also supplies a possibility to express man's cultural concern of the nature of Nature by means of artifacts. In changeable scales, Nature is conceived and narrated in the manner of the landscape.

5.3 Articulated Narration in Threshold and Fenestration

5.3.1 Enclosure and Space, Being and Non-being

The Taoist master Laozi discussed three allegories referred to architectural space, the nave of an axle, clay vessels and a room¹⁴, and argued: it is the emptiness within (non-being), not its being (being of the objects), makes these things useful. Such an understanding of space resonates with the idea of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Inspired by Laozi, he takes a jug as an example to explain the notion of thing. The jug as a thing lies in the coexistence and negotiation between the concrete object and empty space. And spatialization concerns with both interior and exterior. Architecture is defined by its enclosures, but enclosures do not exist alone, whereas upon the idea of adaption or use (Fig 5-37).



Fig 5-37. Liu Songnian. *The landscape of the Four Seasons* (section). Song Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 40 x 69 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing

Chinese traditional buildings are composed by the unit of the bay (间, Jian) – a shelter supported by four posts. “In the elevation, a bay is the span between adjacent frame supports. On a ground plan, it is the rectangle enclosed by four columns at its corners”. The simplest structure like a small pavilion, consists of only one bay and bigger buildings comprise several bays. As the walls between the columns of a bay do not carry weight, they may have windows or doors or even be taken out altogether. This allows much freedom in adapting a building to different needs. (Ledderose, 1998)

¹⁴ “Thirty spokes share a hub; Because the wheel is empty, it can be used in a cart. Knead clay to make a vessel. Because it is empty, it can function as a vessel. Varve out doors and windows to make a room. Because it is empty, they make a room usable. Thus we possess things and benefit from them. But it is their emptiness that makes them useful”. Writings from the eleventh chapter of *Daode Jing*. Laozi. Translation from (Hung, 2017)

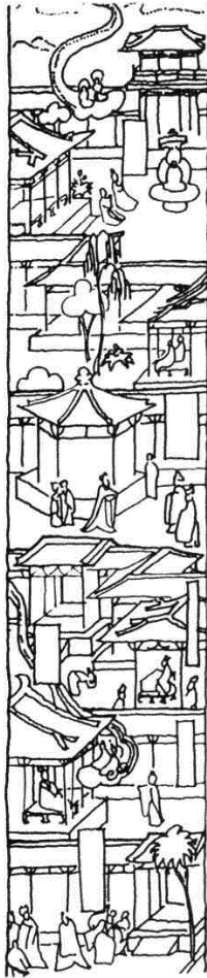


Fig 5-38. Edit by the author. The articulation of space in Chinese paintings by enclosures between being and non-being. Source: (Wang, 2006, p. 332); *Hu Shan Sheng Gai* <<https://shuge.org/ebook/hu-shan-sheng-gai/>>; and Xu Yang. *Gu Su Fan Hua Tu*. 1753

The character of “间(bay)” is composed by a “门(gate)” and a “日(sun)” within it. It means through the enclosures, sunlight could be brought inside. Differing from a typical Western religious building in which the spiritual energy grows largely and highly in an enclosed space, Chinese buildings do not stand alone but are assembled in courtyards and gardens. The being of the buildings and the non-being of yards are correspondently experienced in the crossing of the enclosures. Since the interior is defined but not restricted by boundaries, the being and adjacent non-being are unified into an indeterminate interplay of the complementary. In this manner, the perception of space differs from the Japanese way of meditation statically (Fig 5-39). As argued by Chinese architect Li Xiaodong:

“The Chinese conception of space lies not in appreciating space within an enclosure and looking out into space beyond, but properly experienced by means of the defined enclosure which is tensed towards impending departure or arrival, movements from a space to another... Space is qualified through its dynamism, its connectivity and its correspondence, while yet retaining its composure.” (Li & Yeo, 2007, p. 117)



Fig 5-39. A Chinese garden for embodied roaming and a Japanese garden for quiet meditation. Photo source: left: photograph by Dong Yugan (Jin & Wang, 2017, p. 46). Right: *Japanese Gardens: Right Angle and Natural Form*. 1993. Benedikt Taschen. p. 65

In landscape paintings or real mountains, pavilions are the prominent artificial presence in Nature. Placed in the hills or by lakes, little roofed and open-sided pavilions defined the mountains infiniteness with its finite structure. In urban space, this experience is represented by the articulation between buildings and gardens in thresholds and fenestrations. Diverse types of buildings following the topography (Two-storied Lou, little gazebos near water Xie, formal halls tang, summer houses shaped like boats fang, linear belvederes Xuan, poetry and painting studios) appear in succession as one roam and turns along the path defined by open galleries, covered porches, bridges, circular moon gates etc. As one walked and paused, the landscape unfolded around him as if he were taking a three-dimensional scroll.

Chen Congzhou, a leading Chinese specialist in the history of the garden, introduced these discourses of movement and stillness in Chinese gardening design in *On Chinese Gardens*:

Chinese garden may be divided into two kinds: those for “in-position viewing” i.e. lingering observation from fixed angles, and those for “in-motion viewing” i.e. moving observation along a route of some distance. This distinction must be the first and foremost consideration before constructing a garden... The view changes in every step. This is what is meant by a design for observation from changing angles. (Chen, 2007)

It is not only the way landscape unfolds in front us, but also our state in encountering landscape.

5.3.2 Threshold Space as Behavioral Settings

Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more. For space in the image of man is place. And time in the image of man is occasion.

-Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck
(Lawson, 2001, p. 23)

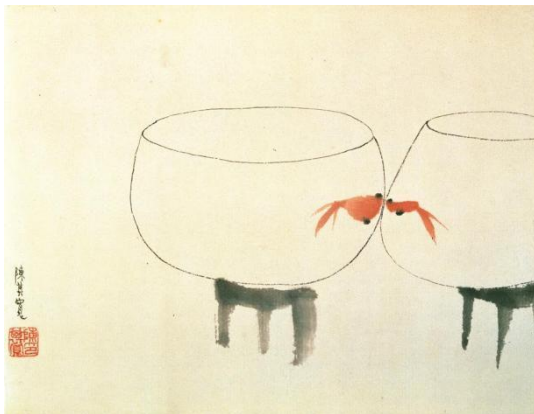


Fig 5-40. Chen Chi Kwan. *Less is More*. 1977.
Lithograph, 32 x 62 cm
Collection of the artist's family

When architecture is viewed as settings in which we behave ourselves, elements such the column as, the wall, and the screen, become crucial not only to the definition of space but also to people's communications and the way our relationships work. "All too often architects seem interested in buildings but not in their occupants. How often do the architectural journals even show people in the photographs?" Lawson Bryan asked this question in *The Language of Space*. We use the language of bodily gesture to communicate in space and architecture is not only a mechanical matter of distance:

The human language of space, whilst it has its cultural variations, can be observed all over the world wherever and whenever people come together. Architecture organizes and structures space for us, and its interiors and the objects enclosing and inhabiting its rooms can facilitate or inhibit our activities by the way they use this language. (Lawson, 2001, p. 6)

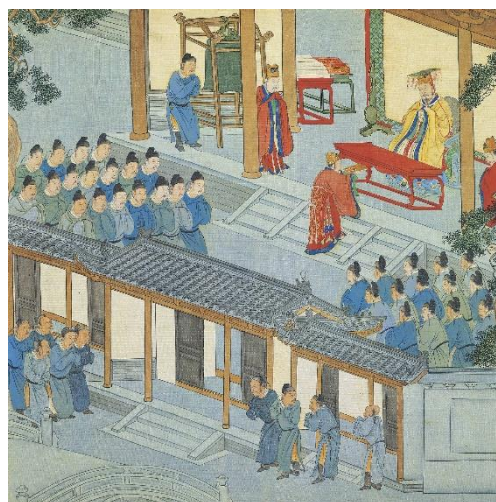


Fig 5-41. Edit by the author. Threshold space and people's behavior within it. Source: Detail of Fig 3-47; Xu Yang. *Gu Su Fan Hua Tu*. 1753; Qiu Ying. *Di Wang Dao Tong Wan Nian Tu*

The dynamic interplay of enclosure and space becomes threshold spaces with elements that delimit as well as connect them. This kind of being establishes a connection between the place and the event, in occasion of man's participation (Fig 5-41). Through enclosures, the articulated narration embodied a physical space as well as a cultural one. It becomes crucial when adapting this language to a modern era, because in order to reconstruct an ever-existed meaningful space, it is fundamental to understand, analyze and communicate it in a comprehensive way.

In a Chinese painting and gardening, human's behaviors are often pre-established by the positioning of architectural elements. In a Ming dynasty print (Fig 3-45), corridors, yards and gardens are used as narrative settings where an event take place and plots can be developed.

In a real garden, for example, Wang Shi Yuan (Fig 5-42), we can see a fine standing rock on a white painted boundary wall. The wall acts eventually to block out the surroundings so the inside could be turned back again to nature. In order to contemplate this symbolic rock undercover, a pavilion is attached to the wall and seats have been set between the pavilion's side pillars. The rockery is not merely a decoration but for contemplation. The position of the wall and the pavilion framed a quiet atmosphere of Nature, and the face-to-face seats enhanced the immortal of the rock.



Fig 5-42. Photo of Wang Shi Yuan. (Keswick, 1980)

Instead of constructing, architect Zeng Renzhen (曾仁臻) has drawn many imagery gardens to explore and understand the poetic relationship between environment and human's occupations. In the drawing *Scholar Dong Enjoying a Garden* (Fig 5-43), we can see a round hole divided the world into two, one realistic and near, while one idealistic and far away. But the trees, stones and rivers are continuous as one, which unites the spatial perception of two worlds in one drawing. The flowing of water indicates the diachronic time while represented in this synchronic picture. Zeng's inspiration comes from a Chinese garden called Yipu in Suzhou province. By adding imagined human figures in two different scale-systems, the drawing becomes more than an interpretation of the garden – a rendering of two parallel worlds. The enclosure in this drawing, does not limit, but creates a rich space. The spatialization is achieved not by visualizing the distance, but imagining it through the depicted people, rockeries and trees, on their contrasts of big and small, here and there, now and then.

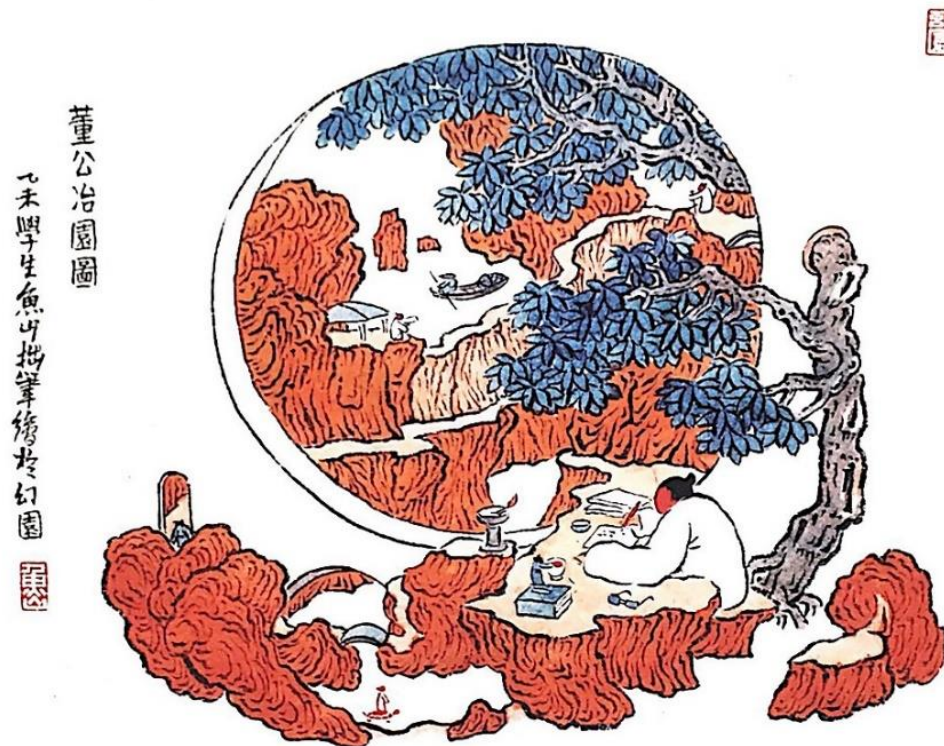


Fig 5-43. Zeng Renzhen. *Scholar Dong Enjoying a Garden*. Source: (Zeng, 2016)



Fig 44. Yi Pu Garden in Suzhou Province. Source: (Jia, 2017, p. 60). Photographer: Cai Xiaochuan

In a Chinese painting, human figures play an essential role in defining the cultural nature of the space. As seen in the Fig 4-10, figure's gestures and movements in landscape painting already convey the poetics even without representing the mountains. In a painting of scholar elites' gathering (Fig 3-27), both the human's behaviors and the architectural settings like screens and furniture are indispensable in composing a cultural space. If we intend to replace either of them, the definition of the space is totally different. Whether by adding modern lifestyle into traditional environments (Fig 5-45) or by replacing ancient enclosures into modern ones (Fig 5-46), a concern about the definition of modern space is revealed. The defamiliarization brought by the juxtaposition of the ancient and the modern drives us to think: does a modernization of architecture merely means to apply the modern material? Are architectural elements merely used to divide space? How much our lifestyle has changed from the past and accordingly, how much influence is brought by the globalization? Rather than a visual description of the actual space, the representation of enclosures can possibly stimulate cultural thoughts and reflections. On this sense, images become legible. The language is the way of representation and meaning is profound.



Fig 5-45. Hong Hao (b. 1965). *Story of Literary Man*. 2007. Photograph and Collage. Since the early 1990s, Contemporary Chinese artist Hong Hao has been manipulating images—of world maps, Chinese scroll paintings, commercial advertisements, and his own possessions—to satirize contemporary China and its post-Mao ascendancy to global political and economic power. From *Elegant Gathering: Hong Hao's Opening*, an exhibition in Chambers Fine Art. April 19, 2007.



Fig 5-46. Drawn by the author. Chinese scholars in Barcelona pavilion of Mies. In the Barcelona pavilion of Mies Van Der Rohe, the screen- like walls, as an architectonic form, blurred interior and exterior as a continuous space like a Chinese garden. In the collage, the building is represented in a Chinese way of oblique frontality. The parallel line implies the time sequence while the oblique lines indicate the spatial depth. The exotic materials, as pictorial representation, the green Tinos marble, golden onyx doré, and opaque grey glass, similar to the pictorial landscape on Chinese screens, represent the virtue of people standing front it. The “Barcelona chair” and its corresponding ottoman stool, in black and white color, is also indicating the social status of people who seat on them. The human figures’ behaviors defined the cultural nature of the space.

For several of Wang Shu's project, the Chinese scholars taken from Li Gonglin's *the Picture of Shan Zhuang* (Fig 3-2) are inserted in the representations. These figures (gathering for a lecture or sitting alone in meditation) and the trees (inside or above the buildings) are not set randomly but carefully conceived. The buildings thus become default settings for many kinds of life. The physical architectural elements are no longer traditional yet in quite modern forms, but the kind of lifestyle and memory that Wang Shu tried to evoke by this narrative medium of architecture, is still with its cultural identity (Fig 5-47 to Fig 5-49).

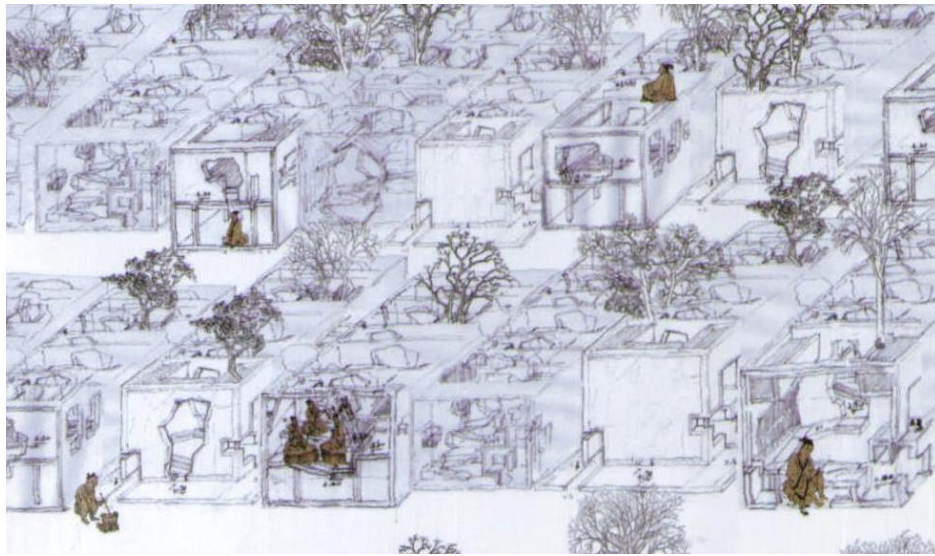


Fig 5-47. Wang Shu. Collage work based on the Tengtou Pavilion project. Detail of Fig 5-26



Fig 5-48. Wang Shu. Drawing for the project Shi Li Hong Zhuang Museum. 2009



Fig 5-49. Iwan Bann. Photography of Wang Shu's urban design in Zhongshan Road, Hangzhou China

“As in painting, it is too a fundamental requirement of architecture to understand the philosophy of harmony between man and universe and to proceed from a point of consideration of their mutual dependence.” (Luis Bravo, 2013) The mutual dependence of man and universe, in a contemporary context, becomes an ideal prototype of dwelling in pioneering Chinese architect Yung Ho Chang (张永和)’s imagination. Since the traditional dwelling mode of a semi-enclosed house surrounded by Nature is no longer adaptable in an urban environment of hustle and bustle, the project Vertical Glass House, turned a classic glass house vertically to make it communicate with the permeant nature – the sky and the earth. Thick enclosed walls isolate it horizontally whilst transparent floors and roof visually connect the inhabitant with the sky and the earth. The conceptual narrative is related to ancient sage Liu Ling’s saying of “The heaven and earth are my dwelling, and house my clothes”. Like a vertical scroll, the vertical glass house interpreted a modern retreat in spiritual pursuit of a pure meditation with the concealed urban noise and disclosed nature (Fig 5-50).

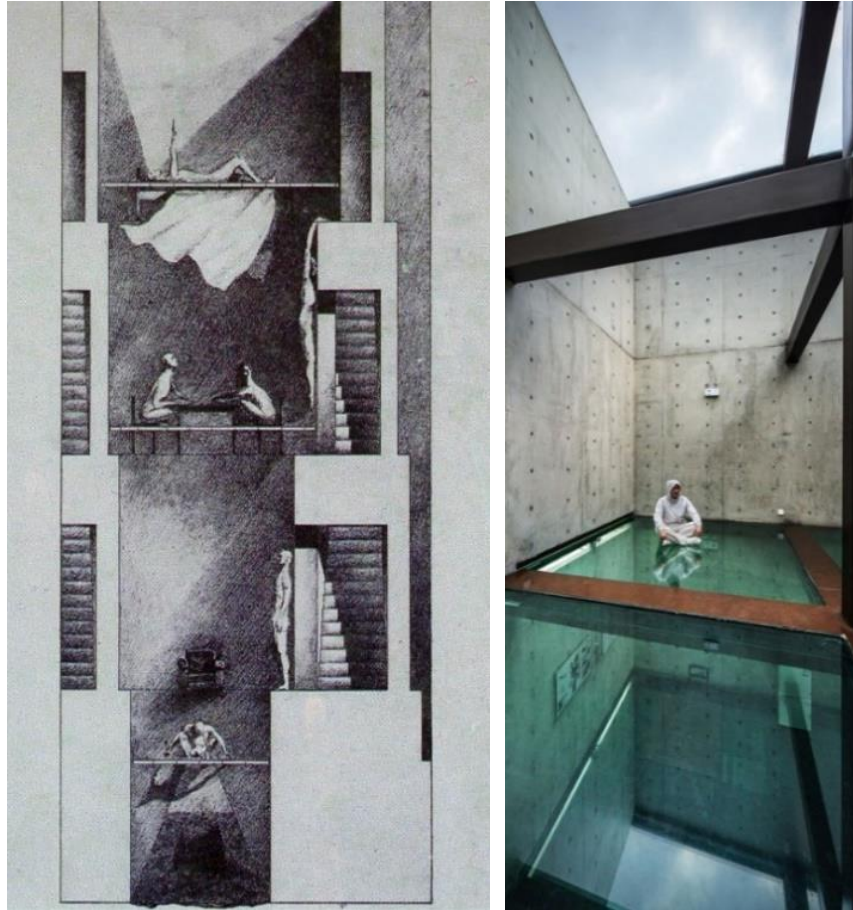


Fig 5-50. Human figures' gestures indicating a metaphysical meaning.

Source: (Left) Chang Yung Ho. Section drawing showing the interaction between human body, furniture and the transparent floors. 1991 (Chang, 2014, p. 191)

(Right) Atelier FCJZ. Photograph of Vertical Glass House. 2014. Shanghai, China.

< <https://www.archdaily.com/471261/vertical-glass-house-atelier-fcjz> >

5.3.3 Album and Folded Models

To represent a garden of both viewing in repose and viewing in motion, the format of scroll was largely applied since a scroll can offer both a glance and a gaze view by the control of the viewer, a hanging scroll presented a garden from an elevated vantage point and a horizontal scroll provided a pictorial analog to the more linear or discursive experience of entering from the beginning, walking through it and leaving the garden at the end. Besides, another medium – the album – was also often used by many painters to depict gardens. In an album, the imagined experience is presented with successive leaves which are poetically named by “scenes” in the garden. In each leave, a corresponded scene of the garden is depicted and inscribed with a poem. Several pages are compiled into an album following the roaming sequence (Fig 5-51). But this format, rather than a series of shots, conveys a self-statement of encountering with the landscape. Like watching a handscroll, when we open an album by hands, it is necessary to go closer to see the images, and with the folding and unfolding movements, we can also control the pace of viewing and decide how much contents to be revealed at once.

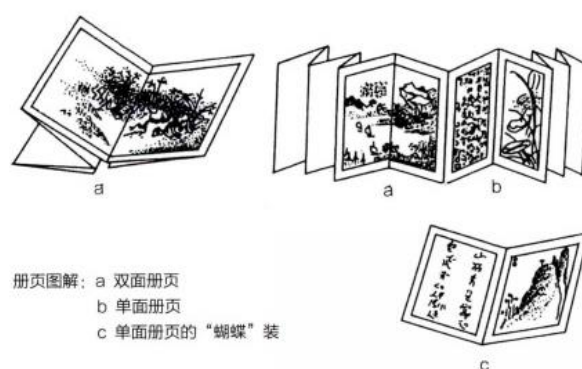


Fig 5-51. Diagram of the format album: a. double painted album; b. single-side painted album; c. single-side painted album in butterfly-fold binding. (Cahill, et al., 2012, p. 149)

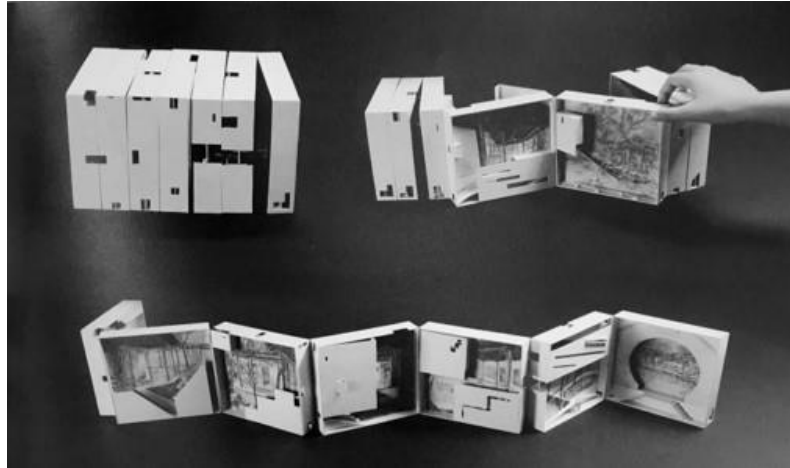


Fig 5-52. Cai Zhiwei. *A Continuous Series of Folded Paintings of the Garden Atmosphere*, Students projects made for the second phase, Illusion and Painting, of Wang Shu's design studio From Ruins to Gardens Study. *Domus China*, June, 2016, 12-109, p17

The traditional language of the album is transformed to folded models in Wang Shu's teaching experiments of China Academy of Art. In this project of students from the second phase, the perception of a Chinese garden is represented by a foldable model of seven leaves (Fig 5-52). Each leaf indicates a particular scene with spatial depth, whilst seven scenes are connected in a flexible way. The action of folding by hand suggests how much a scene is revealed and accordingly the position of the whole model. Not a decided one, but diverse possibilities of the journey are provided.

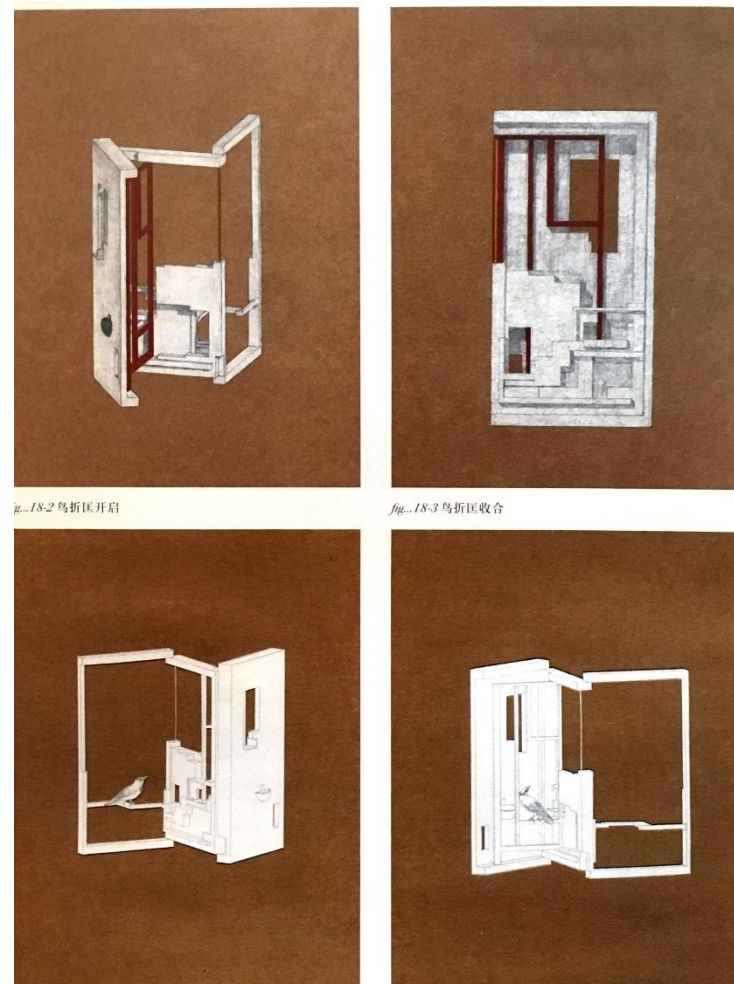


Fig 5-53. Wang Xin. *Folded Screen for Bird*. (Jin & Wang, 2017, p. 80)

When space is released from its frame, the sense of articulation is emphasized. As shown in Wang Xin's teaching project, the album becomes a folded birdhouse where the bird could choose to stay free to the open air, or to inhabit intimately within the enclosure's protection (Fig 5-53). The design is intended for a bird as well for a person in occasion of imaging himself to be small enough to enjoy this manipulated space. In another student work *Highlights from the Opera*, the architectural totally becomes a stage setting for four imagined performance scenes based on the scroll painting *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (Fig 5-2). The screens in the painting are transformed to corner spaces in this project. The interfaces on corners, like screens, combine as well divide space and like a poetic stage, many events could take place between these architectural elements (Fig 5-54).



Fig 5-54. Sun Yu. *Highlights from the Opera*. Graduation project of one of Wang Xin's students, School of Architectural Art, China Academy of Art. 2017. "It features a cross motif that originates from the marginal spaces in Chinese gardens, and also from the expression of traditional Chinese highlights from the opera." (Wang & Jin, 2018)

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1 Important Findings

6.1.1 Particular Visual Skills and Ideologies of Traditional Chinese Paintings

To answer questions like what makes Chinese painting particular, and why is it still valuable to be discussed in a contemporary context, this thesis has discussed the changing modes of Chinese traditional paintings in terms of their conventional schemas as well as their formats. The visual schemas to achieve spatial depth and time durations by two-dimensional representations were discussed based on several art historians' points of view, in notions like the three depths, the angle of totality, and the moving focus or the glance and gaze view, the suggestion by the disclose and conceal, the oblique frontality, etc.

Besides visual skills, the driving reasons behind these identical creations were also explored. In the Chinese traditional context, the perception of time and space is the result of a mental process which intertwines the ability of poetic thinking and the merging philosophies of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The large view of the small indicates a microcosm vision between nature and artifact. The space-time view considers time as something eternally durational, and space something unbound and unlimited. A Chinese painting is a cultural transcription of the physical world and, simultaneously, it leaves sufficient space for the engagement of the human mind. So, a great painting could, prior to sightseeing, be suitable for wandering and dwelling. These ideologies underlined in traditional Chinese paintings make them specific and still have potentials to be reviewed today.

6.1.2 Unframed Formats of Representation, Unbounded Imagination of Architecture

In Chinese visual tradition, what really matters is the manner of representing rather than the objects represented. The format plays a significant role in communicating pictorial ideas to viewers, and it is another feature that makes a Chinese painting particular. This issue was particularly discussed in the researches on Chinese history of art, but in the scope of architectural representation, little attention was paid to it. On the transmission of architectural conceptions and ideas, how much influence is brought by the image-bearing objects? This concern is another finding of this dissertation and it is also related to one possible approach to translating painting to architectural representation.



Fig 6-1. Edit by the author. Traditional and contemporary formats of representation.

In a broader scope, a scroll is especially beneficial for urban narrations because it embodies the diachronic sense of time of the horizontal dimension and the synchronic sense of the vertical one. When the vision is expanded from the gaze of a building to its contexts, the building's own articulation is included in an urban texture. A scroll does not control our station points by limiting the focus in a framed gaze; instead, it offers the spectators many options to enter the painting. The experience of viewing a scroll is a revelation. As one unrolls the scroll, he has no idea about what is coming next: each section presents a new surprise. One can stay longer in the painting, letting his imagination fly like in the act of

reading a poem. Any intention of framing a scroll will lose essential information that only our mind can grasp by watching it in a play of glance and gaze, back and forth. The glance expands the visual field whereas the gaze contemplates it. Therefore, the scroll format is also beneficial to present the “legibility” of cities. Besides, the parallel projection of the scroll counts each gaze equally. The multi and equal gaze supplies a good way to understand how different groups of people interact with urban space and also implies the possibility to juxtapose matters of different contexts. So, scrolls can be used to illustrate urban narrations of political and social understandings as well as sequential or aimless wandering experiences.

The album, another format for garden paintings, is good at representing successive or individual scenes one by one by its several leaves connected in a sequence. In each leave, a scene is depicted and sometimes inscribed with a poem. Like unfolding a scroll, we can control the pace of viewing and decide how much contents will be revealed by an album at once. However, different from a scroll, the folding and unfolding movements also defines a physical space beside a pictorial one. Based on its foldable feature, contemporary architects have transformed various formats of albums into three-dimensional models to explore architectural ideas.

Taking the discourse of format into consideration, new potentials of visual tools are discovered whilst new visions are brought to the start of the design process. During the Renaissance, the development of perspective established the significant role of drawing as a design tool, and later perfected the architectural education system represented by the École des Beaux-Arts. The subversion of representation to a figure-ground relationship thinking, is also implied in Bauhaus's education. Based on the Western geometric system, the visual design tools commonly used in China are perspective, sections, elevations, and planning. However, the technique of projection is not enough to deal with the new needs of our age. The re-examination of traditional formats has also provided new possibilities to graphically express the concepts concerning phenomenal experiences, durational time and cognitive imaginations. Furthermore, considering formats, two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional models become interchangeable. This is especially significant for the representation of space.

6.1.3 Painting as a Poetic Way of Seeing

Design activity should be an interplay of seeing, thinking and doing through circles of perception and expression, but when just an astonishing result is pursued, architectural drawings and models become means to represent the fine appearance of an object, rather than ways to reflect in-deep considerations on the pursuit of meaning. Nowadays, with the unprecedented development of visual media, a rich flow of information is strangling our imagination and creativity. In the image turn, public prefer to appreciate works that are spectacular and eye-catching. As a result, in the realm of architecture, buildings are becoming commercial products to consume and the most iconic ones stand out to be purchased. This phenomenon is reflected on built works as well as on the design process, since our ways of seeing affect our ways of expression, and thus the ways of making architecture. Since the fifteenth century, the change of the very act of looking has transformed from a perspectival one to various anti-perspective directions, from the fact of having seen something to an ideating process of what to see and how to see. This turn plays an essential role on the understanding of architecture and its many relative aspects such as the use of design tools, the attitude to the built environment and the relationship between man and their settlements in a contemporary social context.

Studying Chinese painting, we are actually studying a way of seeing the world, looking while thinking. The three strongly intercommoned Chinese perfections poetry, calligraphy, and painting regard language, and painting as having similar representative powers. Just as a great landscape painting acquires, over time, the resonance of calligraphy and poetry, so the modern architecture acquires history, life, and meaning from traditional paintings. Poetry is superior to the description on the linguistic levels because a dimension of thinking is added. Accordingly, a poetic expression of architecture aims to reach the underlying realities of the material world, attainable through both visual and verbal tools. When we are reading the language of images, the always-present gap between words and images is narrowed and when architects could produce a poem-building, the work is viewed as well as it is read. This is particularly significant in our age since an iconic building is in most of the cases presented by spectacular but prosaic renderings because the eye's comfort is much easier to achieve than mind's ideas. To poetically express architecture means to activate the linguistic function of architecture, of working out inner ideas and presenting them outwardly, of creativity and criticism.

6.1.4 Drawing as a Semantic Medium of Narrative and Critical Thinking

A Chinese painting, whether a landscape or cityscape scroll or a printed illustration, is advantageous to narrate the mutual interaction between human and their living environments in shifting scales. In this poetic language, besides description, there are inserted emotions and concepts. Therefore, it can reflect an architect's attitude towards a particular reality and his worldview in general, especially when the concerns are hard to achieve with real constructions. Drawing becomes the site of architectural innovation opening new territories for practice. It is also what Wang Shu proposed us to do: not rush to act before getting clear of the urban situations. He thought the city today is losing the unity, variety, and informality, as a result of the collapse of language which is also a carrier of culture. The language of traditional landscape painting and maps, for example, is becoming unfamiliar to today's Chinese people, because they are already unable to understand this language and its underlined imagination. Wang Shu's rejection of commercial renderings and the emphasis on natural expressions like practicing calligraphy and drawing by hand is just about this concern

In academic training, the critical language reflected by Chinese paintings is also used. In the education of China Academy of Art, Wang Shu, Wang Xin, and many architects intend to regress to an identical attitude towards Chinese paintings, as an effort to fill the cultural void triggered by the robust and relentless new market economy. For the students, drawings provide a material presence of innovative architectural thinking and offer a site for documenting alternative operations of architecture.

As a reaction to China today's urban constructions and its lack of design thought, many other contemporary architects reflect their critics and expectation of the city in graphic ways since the city is a cultural phenomenon. We have seen how they use drawings to show dimensions that another kind of representation could not afford. The science of perspective can give accurate measurability to a spatial unit, but the phenomenal duration and experiences created by imaginations are immeasurable. Urban poetics is expressed by a much broader human concern of ideal living conditions rather than a faithful representation of urban realities.

On the pursuit of Chinese architecture's modern translation, many contemporary Chinese architects have not turned directly to investigate existing buildings like many previous generations did. Rather than the visual forms of architecture, their interests in pre-modern paintings lie in the cognitive ways of seeing, the narrative approaches to organize occasions and places, and the critic schemas of literati elites' mode of secluded life. They successfully avoid to be limited by a painting's visual aesthetics and still make use of it as a verbal tool to interpret the in-depth meaning of local culture.

6.1.5 Landscape and Cityscape in the Domain of Local Culture

In Chinese landscape paintings, artificial constructions represent man's places in nature as well as man's attitudes towards nature. In a secluded schema, distant nature and detailed artifact can be harmoniously united to a synthesis. The mutually complementary state of being, between the natural and the man-made, is the ideal approach to the creation of space for human activities. The landscape is a poetic scheme of contemplating nature rather than a sentimental naturalistic attitude. The literati men build dwellings of seclusion in landscape paintings as well as in real gardens and almost all garden makers were also painters. Both convey the wish to live in an ideal mode of dwelling free of social turmoil. A landscape painting or a garden painting then becomes a visual demonstration and substitute for real gardens.

Facing again the radical change in social and cultural aspects, contemporary Chinese architects have chosen various ways. Some keep constructing buildings without too much awareness and reflections of the change, some eventually quit the work of architecture because they think painting is freer compared to the too many restrictions of architecture. Some others intend to use drawings to save the crisis of cultural identity that China has been suffered in the modernity debate. Many of the cases analyzed in this thesis belong to the latter two categories. By observing Chinese paintings, Wang Shu emphasized the cultural atmosphere of the place more than the professional concern of architecture. He always says "before becoming an architect, I was first a literati man." This amateur attitude is adopted from literati intellectuals who were "gentlemen, poets, and scholars first and painters only second" (Sullivan, 2008, p. 175). Wang Shu's keen interest in Chinese literati traditions ranges from Chinese garden design, landscape painting to calligraphy which he believes contemporary China has lost. But he didn't translate it into language for immediate use until when he began to draw by hand naturally. And he believes the understanding of painting was deepened while creating architecture.

This thesis also proposed a systematical framework on the relationship between landscape and cityscape painting subjects. For a human, an environment created with an appropriate level of artificial intervention into nature is more beautiful than pure nature itself. This traditional concern between nature and artifact is essentially useful in today's context where Nature has been mostly replaced by man-made constructions. Facing the conflict between development and ecological resources, the rural areas are receiving more attention recently. Chinese traditional philosophy which pursues appropriate balance and interactive relationships of contrasts, has directed an attitude on including fragments and balancing artificiality and naturality. It is relation-driving instead of object-driving.

In a microcosm vision, the literati revelations between man and nature were discussed in the thesis. This was also stated as a poetic approach in drawing and interpreting architecture. Taoist believed that all sizes were relative and different sizes are suited to their specific uses.

From a broader perspective, we can grasp human's minuteness in nature's vastness. Upon a closer observation, human still has his place to dwell. A far distant view and a closer view are combined in the same drawing to control the perceptions of different distances simultaneously. The poetic form of architecture does not care about the reality accurate size, but about the relative scale reflected by imagination. For traditional literati artists, even a small artifact can hold the world, with more reason a garden. Wang Shu adopted this view and even put this "world" into his drawings and architectural designs. Whether in a big or a small artifact, we can create a world. It is not a real world, but a narration of a real world. The key is the poetic way of the narration.

When the Europeans approached China in the 17th century, they discovered and were surprised by the existence of a completely different world. In the *Words and Things*, Michael Foucault introduced us to China's heterotopia in order to make us doubt the rationality with which we perceive and assess reality. Nowadays, Chinese architects are using their own past to shock people from other places as well as from their local territory since their local culture is becoming an otherness even for themselves. This new generation of Chinese designers is acting creatively to carry forward an identical way of thinking by adopting both an intrinsic logic and an imaginative recreation of the experience of the local culture. Such a state of poetic evocation is not unique to Chinese or oriental societies but transcends cultural distinction as a universal perception and creation shared by all civilizations.

6.2 Limitations and Future Extensions

6.2.1 Limited Case Studies in a Historic Scope

Taking traditional Chinese paintings as basic materials, this thesis stated a historic scope of the pre-modern period in the beginning. Although many selected painting cases ranging from landscape to cityscape were studied, the work did not cover Chinese paintings in all the periods before the 19th century, and the selected cases are mainly from Tang to Ming dynasty when Chinese landscape painting was risen to a supreme height and largely influenced by the literati culture. Other periods, for example, the primitive paintings which indicated the origin of Chinese art are also considered significant, but not developed in this thesis. Since Chinese paintings are examined for the use of architectural thinking and design, this study is not an attempt to present a continuous historical account of Chinese paintings. However, based on the established methodological framework, more studies could be conducted in different contexts and cross-cultural comparisons, made either between different periods of Chinese history or between graphical representations of different cultures.

6.2.2 Unpredictable Progresses Underway

Another limitation is also an expectation. Since the exploration of a new modernity based on the local tradition started recently and still underway, many architects and artists are making progressions with each passing day. They are continuously providing evidences to prove that the Chinese visual culture of space is not too elusive to accord with the idea of the construction of architecture. As a reaction against the prosaic description, the language is getting enriched day by day, and each action is adding a layer of meaning to the reality. If we manage to give an ultimate conclusion to this research, we are killing new possibilities as well. Nevertheless, this study has shed light on the role this new generation of architects have played until now, on an expectation of more and more creative works to be done with no distinction between geographical location and time.

“Architecture is a language and I think you have to have a grammar in order to have a language. If you are good at that, you speak a wonderful prose, if you are really good, you can be a poet”.

——Mies van der Rohe

I only wish that the first really worthwhile discovery of science would be that it recognized that the unmeasurable is what they're really fighting to understand, and that the measurable is only the servant of the unmeasurable' that everything that man makes must be fundamentally unmeasurable.

——Louis I. Kahn

It should be our constant endeavor to escape from ourselves and from our machine-minded and psychologically intense age. Only then will we reach the inner harmony of the Chinese spirit which has revealed itself so supremely in Chinese painting.

——George Rowley

A man doesn't go in search of a poem, the poem comes in search of him.

——Southern Song poet Yang Wanli

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